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JOHN LAW,

Projector of the Mississippi Scheme.

Engraved by W. Greatbach, from a rare Print by Leon Schenk (1720.)

London: Published by Richard Bentley, 1841.

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MEMOIRS

OF EXTRAORDINARY

POPULAR DELUSIONS.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

AUTHOR OF

"THE THAMES AND ITS TRIBUTARIES," "THE HOPE OF THE WORLD," ETC.

"Il est bon de connaître les délires de l'esprit humain. Chaque peuple a ses folies plus ou moins grossières."

MILLOT.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1841.

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PREFACE.

THE object of the Author in the following pages has been to collect the most remarkable instances of those moral epidemics which have been excited, sometimes by one cause and sometimes by another, and to show how easily the masses have been led astray, and how imitative and gregarious men are, even in their infatuations and crimes.

Some of the subjects introduced may be familiar to the reader; but the Author hopes that sufficient novelty of detail will be found even in these, to render them acceptable, while they could not be wholly omitted in justice to the subject of which it was proposed to treat. The memoirs of the South Sea madness and the Mississippi delusion are more complete and copious than are to be found elsewhere; and the same may be said of the history of the Witch Mania, which contains an account of its terrific progress in Germany, a part of the subject

which has been left comparatively untouched by Sir Walter Scott, in his "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," the most important that have yet appeared on this fearful but most interesting subject.

Popular delusions began so early, spread so widely, and have lasted so long, that instead of two or three volumes, fifty would scarcely suffice to detail their history. The present may be considered more of a miscellany of delusions than a history,—a chapter only in the great and awful book of human folly which yet remains to be written, and which Porson once jestingly said he would write in five hundred volumes! Interspersed are sketches of some lighter matters, — amusing instances of the imitativeness and wrongheadedness of the people, rather than examples of folly and delusion.

Religious manias have been purposely excluded as incompatible with the limits prescribed to the present work; — a mere list of them would alone be sufficient to occupy a volume.

In another volume, should these be favourably received, the Author will attempt a complete view of the progress of Alchemy and the philosophical delusions that sprang from it, including the Rosicrucians of a bygone, and the Magnetisers of the present, era.

London,
April 23rd. 1841.

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NATIONAL DELUSIONS.

N'en déplaise à ces fous nommés sages de Grèce ;
En ce monde il n'est point de parfaite sagesse ;
Tous les hommes sont fous, et malgré tous leurs soins,
Ne diffèrent entre eux que du plus ou du moins.

BOILEAU.

IN reading the history of nations, we find that, like individuals, they have their whims and their peculiarities; their seasons of excitement and recklessness, when they care not what they do. We find that whole communities suddenly fix their minds upon one object, and go mad in its pursuit; that millions of people become simultaneously impressed with one delusion, and run after it, till their attention is caught by some new folly more captivating than the first. We see one nation suddenly seized, from its highest to its lowest members, with a fierce desire of military glory; another as suddenly becoming crazed upon a religious scruple, and neither of them recovering its senses until it

has shed rivers of blood and sowed a harvest of groans and tears, to be reaped by its posterity. At an early age in the annals of Europe its population lost their wits about the Sepulchre of Jesus, and crowded in frenzied multitudes to the Holy Land: another age went mad for fear of the Devil, and offered up hundreds of thousands of victims to the delusion of witchcraft. At another time, the many became crazed on the subject of the Philosopher's Stone, and committed follies till then unheard of in the pursuit. It was once thought a venial offence in very many countries of Europe to destroy an enemy by slow poison. Persons who would have revolted at the idea of stabbing a man to the heart, drugged his pottage without scruple. Ladies of gentle birth and manners caught the contagion of murder, until poisoning, under their auspices, became quite fashionable. Some delusions, though notorious to all the world, have subsisted for ages, flourishing as widely among civilized and polished nations as among the early barbarians with whom they originated, — that of duelling, for instance, and the belief in omens and divination of the future, which seem to defy the progress of knowledge to eradicate entirely from the popular mind. Money, again, has often been a cause of the delusion of multitudes. Sober nations have all at once become desperate gamblers, and risked almost their existence upon the turn of a piece of paper. To trace the history of the most

prominent of these delusions is the object of the present pages. Men, it has been well said, think in herds; it will be seen that they go mad in herds, while they only recover their senses slowly, and one by one.

In the present state of civilization, society has often shown itself very prone to run a career of folly from the last-mentioned cause. This infatuation has seized upon whole nations in a most extraordinary manner. France, with her Mississippi madness, set the first great example, and was very soon imitated by England with her South Sea Bubble. At an earlier period, Holland made herself still more ridiculous in the eyes of the world, by the frenzy which came over her people for the love of Tulips. Melancholy as all these delusions were in their ultimate results, their history is most amusing. A more ludicrous and yet painful spectacle, than that which Holland presented in the years 1635 and 1636, or France in 1719 and 1720, can hardly be imagined. Taking them in the order of their importance, we shall commence our history with John Law and the famous Mississippi scheme of the years above mentioned.

THE MISSISSIPPI SCHEME.

Some in clandestine companies combine;
Erect new stocks to trade beyond the line;
With air and empty names beguile the town,
And raise new credits first, then cry 'em down;
Divide the empty nothing into shares,
And set the crowd together by the ears.

DEFOE.

THE personal character and career of one man are so intimately connected with the great scheme of the years 1719 and 1720, that a history of the Mississippi madness can have no fitter introduction than a sketch of the life of its great author, John Law. Historians are divided in opinion as to whether they should designate him a knave or a madman. Both epithets were unsparingly applied to him in his lifetime, and while the unhappy consequences of his projects were still deeply felt. Posterity, however, has found reason to doubt the justice of the accusation, and to confess that John Law was neither knave nor madman, but one more deceived than deceiving; more sinned against than

sinning. He was thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy and true principles of credit. He understood the monetary question better than any man of his day; and if his system fell with a crash so tremendous, it was not so much his fault as that of the people amongst whom he had erected it. He did not calculate upon the avaricious frenzy of a whole nation; he did not see that confidence, like mistrust, could be increased, almost *ad infinitum*, and that hope was as extravagant as fear. How was he to foretell that the French people, like the man in the fable, would kill, in their frantic eagerness, the fine goose he had brought to lay them so many golden eggs? His fate was like that which may be supposed to have overtaken the first adventurous boatman who rowed from Erie to Ontario. Broad and smooth was the river on which he embarked; rapid and pleasant was his progress; and who was to stay him in his career? Alas for him! the cataract was nigh. He saw, when it was too late, that the tide which wafted him so joyously along was a tide of destruction; and when he endeavoured to retrace his way, he found that the current was too strong for his weak efforts to stem, and that he drew nearer every instant to the tremendous falls. Down he went over the sharp rocks, and the waters with him. *He* was dashed to pieces with his bark, but the waters, maddened and turned to foam by the rough descent, only boiled and

bubbled for a time, and then flowed on again as smoothly as ever. Just so it was with Law and the French people. He was the boatman and they were the waters.

John Law was born at Edinburgh in the year 1671. His father was the younger son of an ancient family in Fife, and carried on the business of a goldsmith and banker. He amassed considerable wealth in his trade, sufficient to enable him to gratify the wish, so common among his countrymen, of adding a territorial designation to his name. He purchased with this view the estates of Lauriston and Randleston, on the Frith of Forth, on the borders of West and Mid Lothian, and was thenceforth known as Law of Lauriston. The subject of our memoir, being the eldest son, was received into his father's counting-house at the age of fourteen, and for three years laboured hard to acquire an insight into the principles of banking, as then carried on in Scotland. He had always manifested great love for the study of numbers, and his proficiency in the mathematics was considered extraordinary in one of his tender years. At the age of seventeen he was tall, strong, and well made; and his face, although deeply scarred with the small-pox, was agreeable in its expression, and full of intelligence. At this time he began to neglect his business, and becoming vain of his person, indulged in considerable extravagance of

attire. He was a great favourite with the ladies, by whom he was called Beau Law, while the other sex, despising his foppery, nicknamed him Jessamy John. At the death of his father, which happened in 1688, he withdrew entirely from the desk, which had become so irksome, and being possessed of the revenues of the paternal estate of Lauriston, he proceeded to London, to see the world.

He was now very young, very vain, good-looking, tolerably rich, and quite uncontrolled. It is no wonder that, on his arrival in the capital, he should launch out into extravagance. He soon became a regular frequenter of the gaming-houses, and by pursuing a certain plan, based upon some abstruse calculation of chances, he contrived to gain considerable sums. All the gamblers envied him his luck, and many made it a point to watch his play, and stake their money on the same chances. In affairs of gallantry he was equally fortunate; ladies of the first rank smiled graciously upon the handsome Scotchman—the young, the rich, the witty, and the obliging. But all these successes only paved the way for reverses. After he had been for nine years exposed to the dangerous attractions of the gay life he was leading, he became an irrecoverable gambler. As his love of play increased in violence, it diminished in prudence. Great losses were only to be repaired by still greater ventures, and one unhappy day he lost more than he could

repay without mortgaging his family estate. To that step he was driven at last. At the same time his gallantry brought him into trouble. A love affair, or slight flirtation, with a lady of the name of Villiers,* exposed him to the resentment of a Mr. Wilson, by whom he was challenged to fight a duel. Law accepted, and had the ill fortune to shoot his antagonist dead upon the spot. He was arrested the same day, and brought to trial for murder by the relatives of Mr. Wilson. He was afterwards found guilty, and sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to a fine, upon the ground that the offence only amounted to manslaughter. An appeal being lodged by a brother of the deceased, Law was detained in the King's Bench, whence, by some means or other, which he never explained, he contrived to escape; and an action being instituted against the sheriffs, he was advertised in the Gazette, and a reward offered for his apprehension. He was described as "Captain John Law, a Scotchman, aged twenty-six; a very tall, black, lean man; well shaped, above six feet high, with large pock-holes in his face; big nosed, and speaking broad and loud." As this was rather a caricature than a description of him, it has been supposed that it was drawn up with a view to favour his escape. He succeeded in reaching the Continent, where he travelled for three years, and devoted much of his

* Miss Elizabeth Villiers, afterwards Countess of Orkney.

attention to the monetary and banking affairs of the countries through which he passed. He stayed a few months in Amsterdam, and speculated to some extent in the funds. His mornings were devoted to the study of finance and the principles of trade, and his evenings to the gaming-house. It is generally believed that he returned to Edinburgh in the year 1700. It is certain that he published in that city his "Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade." This pamphlet did not excite much attention.

In a short time afterwards he published a project for establishing what he called a Land-bank,* the notes issued by which were never to exceed the value of the entire lands of the state, upon ordinary interest, or were to be equal in value to the land, with the right to enter into possession at a certain time. The project excited a good deal of discussion in the Scottish parliament, and a motion for the establishment of such a bank was brought forward by a neutral party, called the Squadrone, whom Law had interested in his favour. The Parliament ultimately passed a resolution to the effect, that, to establish any kind of paper credit, so as to force it to pass, was an improper expedient for the nation.

Upon the failure of this project, and of his efforts to procure a pardon for the murder of Mr.

* The wits of the day called it a *sand-bank*, which would wreck the vessel of the state.

Wilson, Law withdrew to the Continent, and resumed his old habits of gaming. For fourteen years he continued to roam about, in Flanders, Holland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France. He soon became intimately acquainted with the extent of the trade and resources of each, and daily more confirmed in his opinion that no country could prosper without a paper currency. During the whole of this time he appears to have chiefly supported himself by successful play. At every gambling-house of note in the capitals of Europe, he was known and appreciated as one better skilled in the intricacies of chance than any other man of the day. It is stated in the *Biographie Universelle* that he was expelled, first from Venice, and afterwards from Genoa, by the magistrates, who thought him a visitor too dangerous for the youth of those cities. During his residence in Paris he rendered himself obnoxious to D'Argenson, the lieutenant-general of the police, by whom he was ordered to quit the capital. This did not take place, however, before he had made the acquaintance in the saloons, of the Duke de Vendôme, the Prince de Conti, and of the gay Duke of Orleans, the latter of whom was destined afterwards to exercise so much influence over his fate. The Duke of Orleans was pleased with the vivacity and good sense of the Scottish adventurer, while the latter was no less pleased with the wit and amiability of a prince who promised to become his patron. They were often

thrown into each other's society, and Law seized every opportunity to instil his financial doctrines into the mind of one whose proximity to the throne pointed him out as destined, at no very distant date, to play an important part in the government.

Shortly before the death of Louis XIV, or, as some say, in 1708, Law proposed a scheme of finance to Desmarets, the Comptroller. Louis is reported to have inquired whether the projector were a Catholic, and, on being answered in the negative, to have declined having anything to do with him.*

It was after this repulse that he visited Italy. His mind being still occupied with schemes of finance, he proposed to Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, to establish his land-bank in that country. The Duke replied that his dominions were too circumscribed for the execution of so great a project, and that he was by far too poor a potentate to be ruined. He advised him, however, to try the King of France once more; for he was sure, if he knew anything of the French character, that the

* This anecdote, which is related in the correspondence of Madame de Bavière, Duchess of Orleans, and mother of the Regent, is discredited by Lord John Russell, in his "History of the principal States of Europe, from the Peace of Utrecht;" for what reason he does not inform us. There is no doubt that Law proposed his scheme to Desmarets, and that Louis refused to hear of it. The reason given for the refusal is quite consistent with the character of that bigoted and tyrannical monarch.

people would be delighted with a plan, not only so new, but so plausible.

Louis XIV. died in 1715, and the heir to the throne being an infant only seven years of age, the Duke of Orleans assumed the reins of government, as Regent, during his minority. Law now found himself in a more favourable position. The tide in his affairs had come, which, taken at the flood, was to waft him on to fortune. The Regent was his friend, already acquainted with his theory and pretensions, and inclined, moreover, to aid him in any efforts to restore the wounded credit of France, bowed down to the earth by the extravagance of the long reign of Louis XIV.

Hardly was that monarch laid in his grave ere the popular hatred, suppressed so long, burst forth against his memory. He who, during his life, had been flattered with an excess of adulation, to which history scarcely offers a parallel, was now cursed as a tyrant, a bigot, and a plunderer. His statues were pelted and disfigured; his effigies torn down, amid the execrations of the populace, and his name rendered synonymous with selfishness and oppression. The glory of his arms was forgotten, and nothing was remembered but his reverses, his extravagance, and his cruelty.

The finances of the country were in a state of the utmost disorder. A profuse and corrupt monarch, whose profuseness and corruption were imitated by almost every functionary, from the

highest to the lowest grade, had brought France to the verge of ruin. The national debt amounted to 3000 millions of livres, the revenue to 145 millions, and the expenditure to 142 millions per annum; leaving only three millions to pay the interest upon 3000 millions. The first care of the Regent was to discover a remedy for an evil of such magnitude, and a council was early summoned to take the matter into consideration. The Duke de St. Simon was of opinion that nothing could save the country from revolution but a remedy at once bold and dangerous. He advised the Regent to convoke the States-General, and declare a national bankruptcy. The Duke de Noailles, a man of accommodating principles, an accomplished courtier, and totally averse from giving himself any trouble or annoyance that ingenuity could escape from, opposed the project of St. Simon with all his influence. He represented the expedient as alike dishonest and ruinous. The Regent was of the same opinion, and this desperate remedy fell to the ground.

The measures ultimately adopted, though they promised fair, only aggravated the evil. The first, and most dishonest measure, was of no advantage to the state. A recoinage was ordered, by which the currency was depreciated one-fifth; those who took a thousand pieces of gold or silver to the mint received back an amount of coin of the same nominal value, but only four-fifths of the weight of metal.

By this contrivance the treasury gained seventy-two millions of livres, and all the commercial operations of the country were disordered. A trifling diminution of the taxes silenced the clamours of the people, and for the slight present advantage the great prospective evil was forgotten.

A chamber of justice was next instituted, to inquire into the malversations of the loan-contractors and the farmers of the revenues. Tax collectors are never very popular in any country, but those of France at this period deserved all the odium with which they were loaded. As soon as these farmers-general, with all their hosts of subordinate agents, called *maltôtiers,** were called to account for their misdeeds, the most extravagant joy took possession of the nation. The Chamber of Justice, instituted chiefly for this purpose, was endowed with very extensive powers. It was composed of the presidents and councils of the parliament, the judges of the Courts of Aid and of Requests, and the officers of the Chamber of Account, under the general presidence of the minister of finance. Informers were encouraged to give evidence against the offenders by the promise of one-fifth part of the fines and confiscations. A tenth of all concealed effects belonging to the guilty was promised to such as should furnish the means of discovering them.

* From *maltôte*, an oppressive tax.

The promulgation of the edict constituting this court caused a degree of consternation among those principally concerned which can only be accounted for on the supposition that their peculation had been enormous. But they met with no sympathy. The proceedings against them justified their terror. The Bastile was soon unable to contain the prisoners that were sent to it, and the gaols all over the country teemed with guilty or suspected persons. An order was issued to all innkeepers and postmasters to refuse horses to such as endeavoured to seek safety in flight; and all persons were forbidden, under heavy fines, to harbour them or favour their evasion. Some were condemned to the pillory, others to the gallies, and the least guilty to fine and imprisonment. One only, Samuel Bernard, a rich banker, and farmer-general of a province remote from the capital, was sentenced to death. So great had been the illegal profits of this man,—looked upon as the tyrant and oppressor of his district,—that he offered six millions of livres, or 250,000*l.* sterling, to be allowed to escape.

His bribe was refused, and he suffered the penalty of death. Others, perhaps more guilty, were more fortunate. Confiscation, owing to the concealment of their treasures by the delinquents, often produced less money than a fine. The severity of the government relaxed, and fines, under the de-

nomination of taxes, were indiscriminately levied upon all offenders. But so corrupt was every department of the administration, that the country benefited but little by the sums which thus flowed into the treasury. Courtiers, and courtiers' wives and mistresses, came in for the chief share of the spoils. One contractor had been taxed in proportion to his wealth and guilt, at the sum of twelve millions of livres. The Count * * *, a man of some weight in the government, called upon him, and offered to procure a remission of the fine, if he would give him a hundred thousand crowns. "Vous êtes trop tard, mon ami," replied the financier; "I have already made a bargain with your wife for fifty thousand."†

About a hundred and eighty millions of livres were levied in this manner, of which eighty were applied in payment of the debts contracted by the government. The remainder found its way into the pockets of the courtiers. Madame de Maintenon, writing on this subject, says, "We hear every day of some new grant of the Regent; the people murmur very much at this mode of employing the money taken from the peculators." The

† This anecdote is related by M. de la Hode, in his Life of Philippe of Orleans. It would have looked more authentic if he had given the names of the dishonest contractor and the still more dishonest minister. But M. de la Hode's book is liable to the same objection as most of the French memoirs of that and of subsequent periods. It is sufficient with most of them that an anecdote be *ben trovato;* the *vero* is but matter of secondary consideration.

people, who, after the first burst of their resentment is over, generally express a sympathy for the weak, were indignant that so much severity should be used to so little purpose. They did not see the justice of robbing one set of rogues to fatten another. In a few months all the more guilty had been brought to punishment, and the chamber of justice looked for victims in humbler walks of life. Charges of fraud and extortion were brought against tradesmen of good character, in consequence of the great inducements held out to common informers. They were compelled to lay open their affairs before this tribunal in order to establish their innocence. The voice of complaint resounded from every side, and at the expiration of a year the government found it advisable to discontinue further proceedings. The chamber of justice was suppressed, and a general amnesty granted to all against whom no charges had yet been preferred.

In the midst of this financial confusion Law appeared upon the scene. No man felt more deeply than the Regent the deplorable state of the country, but no man could be more averse from putting his shoulders manfully to the wheel. He disliked business; he signed official documents without proper examination, and trusted to others what he should have undertaken himself. The cares inseparable from his high office were burdensome to him; he saw that something was necessary to be done, but he lacked the energy to do it, and

had not virtue enough to sacrifice his ease and his pleasures in the attempt. No wonder that, with this character, he listened favourably to the mighty projects, so easy of execution, of the clever adventurer whom he had formerly known, and whose talents he appreciated.

When Law presented himself at court, he was most cordially received. He offered two memorials to the Regent, in which he set forth the evils that had befallen France, owing to an insufficient currency, at different times depreciated. He asserted that a metallic currency, unaided by a paper money, was wholly inadequate to the wants of a commercial country, and particularly cited the examples of Great Britain and Holland to show the advantages of paper. He used many sound arguments on the subject of credit, and proposed, as a means of restoring that of France, then at so low an ebb among the nations, that he should be allowed to set up a bank, which should have the management of the royal revenues, and issue notes, both on that and on landed security. He further proposed that this bank should be administered in the King's name, but subject to the control of commissioners, to be named by the States-General.

While these memorials were under consideration, Law translated into French his essay on money and trade, and used every means to extend through the nation his renown as a financier. He soon

became talked of. The confidants of the Regent spread abroad his praise, and every one expected great things of Monsieur Lass.*

On the 5th of May, 1716, a royal edict was published, by which Law was authorised, in conjunction with his brother, to establish a bank, under the name of Law and Company, the notes of which should be received in payment of the taxes. The capital was fixed at six millions of livres, in twelve thousand shares of five hundred livres each, purchasable one-fourth in specie and the remainder in *billets d'état*. It was not thought expedient to grant him the whole of the privileges prayed for in his memorials until experience should have shown their safety and advantage.

Law was now on the high road to fortune. The study of thirty years was brought to guide him in the management of his bank. He made all his notes payable at sight, and in the coin current at the time they were issued. This last was a master-stroke of policy, and immediately rendered his notes more valuable than the precious metals. The latter were constantly liable to depreciation by the unwise tampering of the government. A thousand livres of silver might be worth their nominal value one day and be reduced one-sixth the

* The French pronounced his name in this manner to avoid the ungallic sound, *aw*. After the failure of his scheme, the wags said the nation was *lasse de lui*, and proposed that he should in future be known by the name of Monsieur He*las !*

next, but a note of Law's bank retained its original value. He publicly declared at the same time that a banker deserved death if he made issues without having sufficient security to answer all demands. The consequence was, that his notes advanced rapidly in public estimation, and were received at one per cent. more than specie. It was not long before the trade of the country felt the benefit. Languishing commerce began to lift up her head; the taxes were paid with greater regularity and less murmuring, and a degree of confidence was established that could not fail, if it continued, to become still more advantageous. In the course of a year Law's notes rose to fifteen per cent. premium, while the *billets d'état,* or notes issued by the government, as security for the debts contracted by the extravagant Louis XIV, were at a discount of no less than seventy-eight and a half per cent. The comparison was too great in favour of Law not to attract the attention of the whole kingdom, and his credit extended itself day by day. Branches of his bank were almost simultaneously established at Lyons, Rochelle, Tours, Amiens, and Orleans.

The Regent appears to have been utterly astonished at his success, and gradually to have conceived the idea, that paper, which could so aid a metallic currency, could entirely supersede it. Upon this fundamental error he afterwards acted. In the mean time, Law commenced the famous

project which has handed his name down to posterity. He proposed to the Regent, who could refuse him nothing, to establish a company, that should have the exclusive privilege of trading to the great river Mississippi and the province of Louisiana, on its western bank. The country was supposed to abound in the precious metals, and the company, supported by the profits of their exclusive commerce, were to be the sole farmers of the taxes, and sole coiners of money. Letters patent were issued, incorporating the company, in August 1717. The capital was divided into two hundred thousand shares of five hundred livres each, the whole of which might be paid in *billets d'état,* at their nominal value, although worth no more than 160 livres in the market.

It was now that the frenzy of speculating began to seize upon the nation. Law's bank had effected so much good, that any promises for the future which he thought proper to make were readily believed. The Regent every day conferred new privileges upon the fortunate projector. The bank obtained the monopoly of the sale of tobacco; the sole right of refinage of gold and silver, and was finally erected into the Royal Bank of France. Amid the intoxication of success, both Law and the Regent forgot the maxim so loudly proclaimed by the former, that a banker deserved death who made issues of paper without the necessary funds to provide for them. As soon as the bank, from

a private, became a public institution, the Regent caused a fabrication of notes to the amount of one thousand millions of livres. This was the first departure from sound principles, and one for which Law is not justly blameable. While the affairs of the bank were under his control, the issues had never exceeded sixty millions. Whether Law opposed the inordinate increase is not known, but as it took place as soon as the bank was made a royal establishment, it is but fair to lay the blame of the change of system upon the Regent.

Law found that he lived under a despotic government, but he was not yet aware of the pernicious influence which such a government could exercise upon so delicate a framework as that of credit. He discovered it afterwards to his cost, but in the mean time suffered himself to be impelled by the Regent into courses which his own reason must have disapproved. With a weakness most culpable, he lent his aid in inundating the country with paper money, which, based upon no solid foundation, was sure to fall, sooner or later. The extraordinary present fortune dazzled his eyes, and prevented him from seeing the evil day that would burst over his head, when once, from any cause or other, the alarm was sounded. The Parliament were from the first jealous of his influence as a foreigner, and had, besides, their misgivings as to the safety of his projects. As his influence extended, their animosity increased. D'Aguesseau,

the Chancellor, was unceremoniously dismissed by the Regent for his opposition to the vast increase of paper money, and the constant depreciation of the gold and silver coin of the realm. This only served to augment the enmity of the Parliament, and when D'Argenson, a man devoted to the interests of the Regent, was appointed to the vacant chancellorship, and made at the same time minister of finance, they became more violent than ever. The first measure of the new minister caused a further depreciation of the coin. In order to extinguish the *billets d'état,* it was ordered that persons bringing to the mint four thousand livres in specie and one thousand livres in *billets d'état,* should receive back coin to the amount of five thousand livres. D'Argenson plumed himself mightily upon thus creating five thousand new and smaller livres out of the four thousand old and larger ones, being too ignorant of the true principles of trade and credit to be aware of the immense injury he was inflicting upon both.

The Parliament saw at once the impolicy and danger of such a system, and made repeated remonstrances to the Regent. The latter refused to entertain their petitions, when the Parliament, by a bold, and very unusual stretch of authority, commanded that no money should be received in payment but that of the old standard. The Regent summoned a *lit de justice,* and annulled the decree. The Parliament resisted, and issued another. Again the

Regent exercised his privilege, and annulled it, till the Parliament, stung to fiercer opposition, passed another decree, dated August 12th, 1718, by which they forbade the bank of Law to have any concern, either direct or indirect, in the administration of the revenue; and prohibited all foreigners, under heavy penalties, from interfering, either in their own names, or in that of others, in the management of the finances of the state. The Parliament considered Law to be the author of all the evil, and some of the counsellors, in the virulence of their enmity, proposed that he should be brought to trial, and, if found guilty, be hung at the gates of the Palais de Justice.

Law, in great alarm, fled to the Palais Royal, and threw himself on the protection of the Regent, praying that measures might be taken to reduce the Parliament to obedience. The Regent had nothing so much at heart, both on that account and because of the disputes that had arisen relative to the legitimation of the Duke of Maine and the Count of Thoulouse, the sons of the late King. The Parliament was ultimately overawed by the arrest of their president and two of the counsellors, who were sent to distant prisons.

Thus the first cloud upon Law's prospects blew over: freed from apprehension of personal danger, he devoted his attention to his famous Mississippi project, the shares of which were rapidly rising, in spite of the Parliament. At the com-

mencement of the year 1719 an edict was published, granting to the Mississippi Company the exclusive privilege of trading to the East Indies, China, and the South Seas, and to all the possessions of the French East India Company, established by Colbert. The Company, in consequence of this great increase of their business, assumed, as more appropriate, the title of Company of the Indies, and created fifty thousand new shares. The prospects now held out by Law were most magnificent. He promised a yearly dividend of two hundred livres upon each share of five hundred, which, as the shares were paid for in *billets d'état*, at their nominal value, but worth only 100 livres, was at the rate of about 120 per cent. profit.

The public enthusiasm, which had been so long rising, could not resist a vision so splendid. At least three hundred thousand applications were made for the fifty thousand new shares, and Law's house in the Rue de Quincampoix was beset from morning to night by the eager applicants. As it was impossible to satisfy them all, it was several weeks before a list of the fortunate new stockholders could be made out, during which time the public impatience rose to a pitch of frenzy. Dukes, marquises, counts, with their duchesses, marchionesses, and countesses, waited in the streets for hours every day before Mr. Law's door to know the result. At last, to avoid the jostling of the plebeian crowd, which, to the number of thousands,

filled the whole thoroughfare, they took apartments in the adjoining houses, that they might be continually near the temple whence the new Plutus was diffusing wealth. Every day the value of the old shares increased, and the fresh applications, induced by the golden dreams of the whole nation, became so numerous that it was deemed advisable to create no less than three hundred thousand new shares, at five thousand livres each, in order that the Regent might take advantage of the popular enthusiasm to pay off the national debt. For this purpose, the sum of fifteen hundred millions of livres was necessary. Such was the eagerness of the nation, that thrice the sum would have been subscribed if the government had authorised it.

Law was now at the zenith of his prosperity, and the people were rapidly approaching the zenith of their infatuation. The highest and the lowest classes were alike filled with a vision of boundless wealth. There was not a person of note among the aristocracy, with the exception of the Duke of St. Simon and Marshal Villars, who was not engaged in buying or selling stock. People of every age and sex, and condition in life, speculated in the rise and fall of the Mississippi bonds. The Rue de Quincampoix was the grand resort of the jobbers, and it being a narrow, inconvenient street, accidents continually occurred in it, from the tremendous pressure of the crowd. Houses in it, worth, in ordinary times, a thousand livres of yearly

rent, yielded as much as twelve or sixteen thousand. A cobbler, who had a stall in it, gained about two hundred livres a day by letting it out, and furnishing writing materials to brokers and their clients. The story goes, that a hump-backed man who stood in the street gained considerable sums by lending his hump as a writing-desk to the eager speculators! The great concourse of persons who assembled to do business brought a still greater concourse of spectators. These again drew all the thieves and immoral characters of Paris to the spot, and constant riots and disturbances took place. At nightfall, it was often found necessary to send a troop of soldiers to clear the street.

Law, finding the inconvenience of his residence, removed to the Place Vendôme, whither the crowd of *agioteurs* followed him. That spacious square soon became as thronged as the Rue de Quincampoix: from morning to night it presented the appearance of a fair. Booths and tents were erected for the transaction of business and the sale of refreshments, and gamblers with their roulette tables stationed themselves in the very middle of the place, and reaped a golden, or rather a paper, harvest from the throng. The Boulevards and public gardens were forsaken; parties of pleasure took their walks in preference in the Place Vendôme, which became the fashionable lounge of the idle, as well as the general rendezvous of the busy.

The noise was so great all day, that the Chancellor, whose court was situated in the square, complained to the Regent and the municipality, that he could not hear the advocates. Law, when applied to, expressed his willingness to aid in the removal of the nuisance, and for this purpose entered into a treaty with the Prince de Carignan for the Hôtel de Soissons, which had a garden of several acres in the rear. A bargain was concluded, by which Law became the purchaser of the hotel, at an enormous price, the Prince reserving to himself the magnificent gardens as a new source of profit. They contained some fine statues and several fountains, and were altogether laid out with much taste. As soon as Law was installed in his new abode, an edict was published, forbidding all persons to buy or sell stock anywhere but in the gardens of the Hôtel de Soissons. In the midst among the trees, about five hundred small tents and pavilions were erected, for the convenience of the stock-jobbers. Their various colours, the gay ribands and banners which floated from them, the busy crowds which passed continually in and out—the incessant hum of voices, the noise, the music, and the strange mixture of business and pleasure on the countenances of the throng, all combined to give the place an air of enchantment that quite enraptured the Parisians. The Prince de Carignan made enormous profits while the delusion lasted. Each tent was let at the rate of five hundred livres a

month; and, as there were at least five hundred of them, his monthly revenue from this source alone must have amounted to 250,000 livres, or upwards of 10,000*l.* sterling.

The honest old soldier, Marshal Villars, was so vexed to see the folly which had smitten his countrymen, that he never could speak with temper on the subject. Passing one day through the Place Vendôme in his carriage, the choleric gentleman was so annoyed at the infatuation of the people, that he abruptly ordered his coachman to stop, and, putting his head out of the carriage window, harangued them for full half an hour on their "disgusting avarice." This was not a very wise proceeding on his part. Hisses and shouts of laughter resounded from every side, and jokes without number were aimed at him. There being at last strong symptoms that something more tangible was flying through the air in the direction of his head, the Marshal was glad to drive on. He never again repeated the experiment.

Two sober, quiet, and philosophic men of letters, M. de la Motte and the Abbé Terrason, congratulated each other, that they, at least, were free from this strange infatuation. A few days afterwards, as the worthy Abbé was coming out of the Hôtel de Soissons, whither he had gone to buy shares in the Mississippi, whom should he see but his friend La Motte entering for the same purpose. "Ha!" said the Abbé, smiling, "is that *you?*"

"Yes," said La Motte, pushing past him as fast as he was able; "and can that be *you?*" The next time the two scholars met, they talked of philosophy, of science, and of religion, but neither had courage for a long time to breathe one syllable about the Mississippi. At last, when it was mentioned, they agreed that a man ought never to swear against his doing any one thing, and that there was no sort of extravagance of which even a wise man was not capable.

During this time, Law, the new Plutus, had become all at once the most important personage of the state. The ante-chambers of the Regent were forsaken by the courtiers. Peers, judges, and bishops thronged to the Hôtel de Soissons; officers of the army and navy, ladies of title and fashion, and every one to whom hereditary rank or public employ gave a claim to precedence, were to be found waiting in his ante-chambers to beg for a portion of his India stock. Law was so pestered that he was unable to see one-tenth part of the applicants, and every manœuvre that ingenuity could suggest was employed to gain access to him. Peers, whose dignity would have been outraged if the Regent had made them wait half an hour for an interview, were content to wait six hours for the chance of seeing Monsieur Law. Enormous fees were paid to his servants, if they would merely announce their names. Ladies of rank employed the blandishments of their smiles for the same object; but

many of them came day after day for a fortnight before they could obtain an audience. When Law accepted an invitation, he was sometimes so surrounded by ladies, all asking to have their names put down in his lists as shareholders in the new stock, that, in spite of his well-known and habitual gallantry, he was obliged to tear himself away *par force*. The most ludicrous stratagems were employed to have an opportunity of speaking to him. One lady, who had striven in vain during several days, gave up in despair all attempts to see him at his own house, but ordered her coachman to keep a strict watch whenever she was out in her carriage, and if he saw Mr. Law coming, to drive against a post, and upset her. The coachman promised obedience, and for three days the lady was driven incessantly through the town, praying inwardly for the opportunity to be overturned. At last she espied Mr. Law, and, pulling the string, called out to the coachman, "Upset us now! for God's sake, upset us now!" The coachman drove against a post, the lady screamed, the coach was overturned, and Law, who had seen the *accident*, hastened to the spot to render assistance. The cunning dame was led into the Hôtel de Soissons, where she soon thought it advisable to recover from her fright, and, after apologizing to Mr. Law, confessed her stratagem. Law smiled, and entered the lady in his books as the purchaser of a quantity of India stock. Another story is told of a

Madame de Boucha, who, knowing that Mr. Law was at dinner at a certain house, proceeded thither in her carriage, and gave the alarm of fire. The company started from table, and Law among the rest; but, seeing one lady making all haste into the house towards him, while everybody else was scampering away, he suspected the trick, and ran off in another direction.

Many other anecdotes are related, which even, though they may be a little exaggerated, are nevertheless worth preserving, as showing the spirit of that singular period.* The Regent was one day mentioning, in the presence of D'Argenson, the Abbé Dubois, and some other persons, that he was desirous of deputing some lady, of the rank at least of a Duchess, to attend upon his daughter at Modena; "but," added he, "I do not exactly know where to find one." "No!" replied one, in affected surprise; "I can tell you where to find every Duchess in France:—you have only to go to Mr. Law's; you will see them every one in his ante-chamber."

M. de Chirac, a celebrated physician, had bought stock at an unlucky period, and was very anxious to sell out. Stock, however continued to fall for

* The curious reader may find an anecdote of the eagerness of the French ladies to retain Law in their company, which will make him blush or smile according as he happens to be very modest or the reverse. It is related in the Letters of Madame Charlotte Elizabeth de Bavière, Duchess of Orleans, vol. ii. p. 274.

two or three days, much to his alarm. His mind was filled with the subject, when he was suddenly called upon to attend a lady, who imagined herself unwell. He arrived, was shown up stairs, and felt the lady's pulse. "It falls! it falls! good God! it falls continually!" said he, musingly, while the lady looked up in his face, all anxiety for his opinion. "Oh! M. de Chirac," said she, starting to her feet, and ringing the bell for assistance; "I am dying! I am dying! it falls! it falls! it falls!" "What falls?" inquired the doctor, in amazement. "My pulse! my pulse!" said the lady; "I must be dying." "Calm your apprehensions, my dear Madam," said M. de Chirac; "I was speaking of the stocks. The truth is, I have been a great loser, and my mind is so disturbed, I hardly know what I have been saying."

The price of shares sometimes rose ten or twenty per cent. in the course of a few hours, and many persons in the humbler walks of life, who had risen poor in the morning, went to bed in affluence. An extensive holder of stock, being taken ill, sent his servant to sell two hundred and fifty shares, at eight thousand livres each, the price at which they were then quoted. The servant went, and, on his arrival in the Jardin de Soissons, found that in the interval the price had risen to ten thousand livres. The difference of two thousand livres on the two hundred and fifty shares, amounting to 500,000 livres, or 20,000*l.* sterling, he very coolly trans-

ferred to his own use, and, giving the remainder to his master, set out the same evening for another country. Law's coachman in a very short time made money enough to set up a carriage of his own, and requested permission to leave his service. Law, who esteemed the man, begged of him as a favour, that he would endeavour, before he went, to find a substitute as good as himself. The coachman consented, and in the evening brought two of his former comrades, telling Mr. Law to choose between them, and he would take the other. Cookmaids and footmen were now and then as lucky, and, in the full-blown pride of their easily-acquired wealth, made the most ridiculous mistakes. Preserving the language and manners of their old, with the finery of their new station, they afforded continual subjects for the pity of the sensible, the contempt of the sober, and the laughter of everybody. But the folly and meanness of the higher ranks of society were still more disgusting. One instance alone, related by the Duke de St. Simon, will show the unworthy avarice which infected the whole of society. A man of the name of André, without character or education, had, by a series of well-timed speculations in Mississippi bonds, gained enormous wealth, in an incredibly short space of time. As St. Simon expresses it, "he had amassed mountains of gold." As he became rich, he grew ashamed of the lowness of his birth, and anxious above all things to be allied to no-

bility. He had a daughter, an infant only three years of age, and he opened a negotiation with the aristocratic and needy family of D'Oyse, that this child should, upon certain conditions, marry a member of that house. The Marquis d'Oyse, to his shame, consented, and promised to marry her himself on her attaining the age of twelve, if the father would pay him down the sum of a hundred thousand crowns, and twenty thousand livres every year, until the celebration of the marriage. The Marquis was himself in his thirty-third year. This scandalous bargain was duly signed and sealed, the stockjobber furthermore agreeing to settle upon his daughter, on the marriage-day, a fortune of several millions. The Duke of Brancas, the head of the family, was present throughout the negotiation, and shared in all the profits. St. Simon, who treats the matter with the levity becoming what he thought so good a joke, adds, "that people did not spare their animadversions on this beautiful marriage," and further informs us, "that the project fell to the ground some months afterwards by the overthrow of Law, and the ruin of the ambitious Monsieur André." It would appear, however, that the noble family never had the honesty to return the hundred thousand crowns.

Amid events like these, which, humiliating though they be, partake largely of the ludicrous, others occurred of a more serious nature. Robberies in the streets were of daily occurrence, in consequence

of the immense sums, in paper, which people carried about with them. Assassinations were also frequent. One case in particular fixed the attention of the whole of France, not only on account of the enormity of the offence, but of the rank and high connexions of the criminal.

The Count d'Horn, a younger brother of the Prince d'Horn, and related to the noble families of D'Aremberg, De Ligne, and De Montmorency, was a young man of dissipated character, extravagant to a degree, and unprincipled as he was extravagant. In connexion with two other young men as reckless as himself, named Mille, a Piedmontese captain, and one Destampes, or Lestang, a Fleming, he formed a design to rob a very rich broker, who was known, unfortunately for himself, to carry great sums about his person. The Count pretended a desire to purchase of him a number of shares in the Company of the Indies, and for that purpose appointed to meet him in a *cabaret*, or low public-house, in the neighbourhood of the Place Vendôme. The unsuspecting broker was punctual to his appointment; so were the Count d'Horn and his two associates, whom he introduced as his particular friends. After a few moments' conversation, the Count d'Horn suddenly sprang upon his victim, and stabbed him three times in the breast with a poniard. The man fell heavily to the ground, and, while the Count was employed in rifling his portfolio of bonds in

the Mississippi and Indian schemes to the amount of one hundred thousand crowns, Mille, the Piedmontese, stabbed the unfortunate broker again and again, to make sure of his death. But the broker did not fall without a struggle, and his cries brought the people of the *cabaret* to his assistance. Lestang, the other assassin, who had been set to keep watch at a staircase, sprang from a window and escaped; but Mille and the Count d'Horn were seized in the very act.

This crime, committed in open day, and in so public a place as a *cabaret*, filled Paris with consternation. The trial of the assassins commenced on the following day, and the evidence being so clear, they were both found guilty and condemned to be broken alive on the wheel. The noble relatives of the Count d'Horn absolutely blocked up the ante-chambers of the Regent, praying for mercy on the misguided youth, and alleging that he was insane. The Regent avoided them as long as possible, being determined that, in a case so atrocious, justice should take its course; but the importunity of these influential suitors was not to be overcome so silently, and they at last forced themselves into the presence of the Regent, and prayed him to save their house the shame of a public execution. They hinted that the Princes d'Horn were allied to the illustrious family of Orleans, and added that the Regent himself would be disgraced if a kinsman of his should die by the hands of a common

executioner. The Regent, to his credit, was proof against all their solicitations, and replied to their last argument in the words of Corneille,—

"Le crime fait la honte, et non pas l'échafaud:"

adding, that whatever shame there might be in the punishment he would very willingly share with the other relatives. Day after day they renewed their entreaties, but always with the same result. At last they thought that if they could interest the Duke de St. Simon in their favour, a man for whom the Regent felt sincere esteem, they might succeed in their object. The Duke, a thorough aristocrat, was as shocked as they were, that a noble assassin should die by the same death as a plebeian felon, and represented to the Regent the impolicy of making enemies of so numerous, wealthy, and powerful a family. He urged, too, that in Germany, where the family of D'Aremberg had large possessions, it was the law, that no relative of a person broken on the wheel could succeed to any public office or employ until a whole generation had passed away. For this reason he thought the punishment of the guilty Count might be transmuted into beheading, which was considered all over Europe as much less infamous. The Regent was moved by this argument, and was about to consent, when Law, who felt peculiarly interested in the fate of the murdered man, confirmed him in his former resolution, to let the law take its course.

The relatives of D'Horn were now reduced to the last extremity. The Prince de Robec Montmorency, despairing of other methods, found means to penetrate into the dungeon of the criminal, and offering him a cup of poison, implored him to save them from disgrace. The Count d'Horn turned away his head, and refused to take it. Montmorency pressed him once more, and losing all patience at his continued refusal, turned on his heel, and exclaiming, "Die, then, as thou wilt, mean-spirited wretch! thou art fit only to perish by the hands of the hangman!" left him to his fate.

D'Horn himself petitioned the Regent that he might be beheaded, but Law, who exercised more influence over his mind than any other person, with the exception of the notorious Abbé Dubois, his tutor, insisted that he could not in justice succumb to the self-interested views of the D'Horns. The Regent had from the first been of the same opinion, and within six days after the commission of their crime, D'Horn and Mille were broken on the wheel in the Place de Grève. The other assassin, Lestang, was never apprehended.

This prompt and severe justice was highly pleasing to the populace of Paris; even M. de Quincampoix, as they called Law, came in for a share of their approbation for having induced the Regent to show no favour to a patrician. But the number of robberies and assassinations did not diminish.

No sympathy was shown for rich jobbers when they were plundered: the general laxity of public morals, conspicuous enough before, was rendered still more so by its rapid pervasion of the middle classes, who had hitherto remained comparatively pure, between the open vices of the class above and the hidden crimes of the class below them. The pernicious love of gambling diffused itself through society, and bore all public, and nearly all private, virtue before it.

For a time, while confidence lasted, an impetus was given to trade, which could not fail to be beneficial. In Paris, especially, the good results were felt. Strangers flocked into the capital from every part, bent, not only upon making money, but on spending it. The Duchess of Orleans, mother of the Regent, computes the increase of the population during this time, from the great influx of strangers from all parts of the world, at 305,000 souls. The housekeepers were obliged to make up beds in garrets, kitchens, and even stables, for the accommodation of lodgers; and the town was so full of carriages and vehicles of every description, that they were obliged in the principal streets to drive at a foot-pace for fear of accidents. The looms of the country worked with unusual activity, to supply rich laces, silks, broad-cloth, and velvets, which being paid for in abundant paper, increased in price four-fold. Provisions shared the general advance; bread, meat, and vegetables

were sold at prices greater than had ever before been known; while the wages of labour rose in exactly the same proportion. The artisan, who formerly gained fifteen sous per diem, now gained sixty. New houses were built in every direction; an illusory prosperity shone over the land, and so dazzled the eyes of the whole nation that none could see the dark cloud on the horizon, announcing the storm that was too rapidly approaching.

Law himself, the magician whose wand had wrought so surprising a change, shared, of course, in the general prosperity. His wife and daughter were courted by the highest nobility, and their alliance sought by the heirs of ducal and princely houses. He bought two splendid estates in different parts of France, and entered into a negotiation with the family of the Duke de Sully for the purchase of the Marquisate of Rosny. His religion being an obstacle to his advancement, the Regent promised, if he would publicly conform to the Catholic faith, to make him comptroller-general of the finances. Law, who had no more real religion than any other professed gambler, readily agreed, and was confirmed by the Abbé de Tencin in the cathedral of Melun, in presence of a great crowd of spectators.* On the following day he

* The following squib was circulated on the occasion:—

"Foin de ton zèle séraphique,
Malheureux Abbé de Tencin,
Depuis que Law est Catholique,
Tout le royaume est Capucin!"

was elected honorary churchwarden of the parish of St. Roch, upon which occasion he made it a present of the sum of five hundred thousand livres. His charities, always magnificent, were not always so ostentatious. He gave away great sums privately, and no tale of real distress ever reached his ears in vain.

At this time, he was by far the most influential person of the state. The Duke of Orleans had so much confidence in his sagacity, and the success of his plans, that he always consulted him upon every matter of moment. He was by no means unduly elevated by his prosperity, but remained the same simple, affable, sensible man that he had shown himself in adversity. His gallantry, which was always delightful to the fair objects of it, was of a nature, so kind, so gentlemanly, and so respectful, that not even a lover could have taken offence at it. If upon any occasion he showed any symptoms of haughtiness, it was to the cringing nobles, who lavished their adulation upon him till it became fulsome. He often took pleasure in seeing how long he could make them dance attendance upon him for a single favour. To such of his own countrymen as by

Thus, somewhat weakly and paraphrastically rendered by Justansond, in his translation of the "Memoirs of Louis XV:"—

> "Tencin, a curse on thy seraphic zeal,
> Which by persuasion hath contrived the means
> To make the Scotchman at our altars kneel,
> Since which we all are poor as Capucines!"

chance visited Paris, and sought an interview with him, he was, on the contrary, all politeness and attention. When Archibald Campbell, Earl of Islay, and afterwards Duke of Argyle, called upon him in the Place Vendôme, he had to pass through an ante-chamber crowded with persons of the first distinction, all anxious to see the great financier, and have their names put down as first on the list of some new subscription. Law himself was quietly sitting in his library, writing a letter to the gardener at his paternal estate of Lauriston about the planting of some cabbages! The Earl stayed for a considerable time, played a game of piquet with his countryman, and left him, charmed with his ease, good sense, and good breeding.

Among the nobles who, by means of the public credulity at this time, gained sums sufficient to repair their ruined fortunes, may be mentioned the names of the Dukes de Bourbon, de Guiche, de la Force,* de Chaulnes, and d'Antin; the Marechal d'Estrées, the Princes de Rohan, de Poix, and de Léon. The Duke de Bourbon, son of Louis XIV. by Madame de Montespan, was peculiarly fortunate in his speculations in Mississippi paper.

* The Duke de la Force gained considerable sums, not only by jobbing in the stocks, but in dealing in porcelain, spices, &c. It was debated for a length of time in the Parliament of Paris whether he had not, in his quality of spice-merchant, forfeited his rank in the peerage. It was decided in the negative. A caricature of him was made, dressed as a street porter, carrying a large bale of spices on his back, with the inscription, "Admirez La Force."

He rebuilt the royal residence of Chantilly in a style of unwonted magnificence, and, being passionately fond of horses, he erected a range of stables, which were long renowned throughout Europe, and imported a hundred and fifty of the finest racers from England, to improve the breed in France. He bought a large extent of country in Picardy, and became possessed of nearly all the valuable lands lying between the Oise and the Somme.

When fortunes such as these were gained, it is no wonder that Law should have been almost worshipped by the mercurial population. Never was monarch more flattered than he was. All the small poets and *littérateurs* of the day poured floods of adulation upon him. According to them he was the saviour of the country, the tutelary divinity of France; wit was in all his words, goodness in all his looks, and wisdom in all his actions. So great a crowd followed his carriage whenever he went abroad, that the Regent sent him a troop of horse as his permanent escort, to clear the streets before him.

It was remarked at this time, that Paris had never before been so full of objects of elegance and luxury. Statues, pictures, and tapestries were imported in great quantities from foreign countries, and found a ready market. All those pretty trifles in the way of furniture and ornament which the French excel in manufacturing, were no longer the exclusive play-things of the aristocracy, but were to be found in abundance in the houses of

traders and the middle classes in general. Jewellery of the most costly description was brought to Paris as the most favourable mart. Among the rest, the famous diamond, bought by the Regent, and called by his name, and which long adorned the crown of France. It was purchased for the sum of two millions of livres, under circumstances which show that the Regent was not so great a gainer as some of his subjects, by the impetus which trade had received. When the diamond was first offered to him, he refused to buy it, although he desired, above all things, to possess it, alleging as his reason, that his duty to the country he governed would not allow him to spend so large a sum of the public money for a mere jewel. This valid and honourable excuse threw all the ladies of the court into alarm, and nothing was heard for some days but expressions of regret, that so rare a gem should be allowed to go out of France; no private individual being rich enough to buy it. The Regent was continually importuned about it; but all in vain, until the Duke de St. Simon, who, with all his ability, was something of a twaddler, undertook the weighty business. His entreaties, being seconded by Law, the good-natured Regent gave his consent, leaving to Law's ingenuity to find the means to pay for it. The owner took security for the payment of the sum of two millions of livres within a stated period, receiving, in the mean time, the interest of five per cent. upon that

amount, and being allowed, besides, all the valuable clippings of the gem. St. Simon, in his Memoirs, relates, with no little complacency, his share in this transaction. After describing the diamond to be as large as a greengage, of a form nearly round, perfectly white, and without flaw, and weighing more than five hundred grains, he concludes with a chuckle, by telling the world, "that he takes great credit to himself for having induced the Regent to make so illustrious a purchase." In other words, he was proud that he had induced him to sacrifice his duty, and buy a bauble for himself, at an extravagant price, out of the public money.

Thus the system continued to flourish till the commencement of the year 1720. The warnings of the Parliament, that too great a creation of paper money would, sooner or later, bring the country to bankruptcy, were disregarded. The Regent, who knew nothing whatever of the philosophy of finance, thought that a system which had produced such good effects could never be carried to excess. If five hundred millions of paper had been of such advantage, five hundred millions additional would be of still greater advantage. This was the grand error of the Regent, and which Law did not attempt to dispel. The extraordinary avidity of the people kept up the delusion; and the higher the price of Indian and Mississippi stock, the more *billets de banque* were issued to keep pace with

it. The edifice thus reared might not unaptly be compared to the gorgeous palace erected by Potemkin, that princely barbarian of Russia, to surprise and please his imperial mistress: huge blocks of ice were piled one upon another; ionic pillars, of chastest workmanship, in ice, formed a noble portico; and a dome, of the same material, shone in the sun, which had just strength enough to gild, but not to melt it. It glittered afar, like a palace of crystals and diamonds; but there came one warm breeze from the south, and the stately building dissolved away, till none were able even to gather up the fragments. So with Law and his paper system. No sooner did the breath of popular mistrust blow steadily upon it, than it fell to ruins, and none could raise it up again.

The first slight alarm that was occasioned was early in 1720. The Prince de Conti, offended that Law should have denied him fresh shares in India stock, at his own price, sent to his bank to demand payment in specie of so enormous a quantity of notes, that three waggons were required for its transport. Law complained to the Regent, and urged on his attention the mischief that would be done, if such an example found many imitators. The Regent was but too well aware of it, and, sending for the Prince de Conti, ordered him, under penalty of his high displeasure, to refund to the Bank two-thirds of the specie which he had withdrawn from it. The Prince was forced to obey

the despotic mandate. Happily for Law's credit, De Conti was an unpopular man: everybody condemned his meanness and cupidity, and agreed that Law had been hardly treated. It is strange, however, that so narrow an escape should not have made both Law and the Regent more anxious to restrict their issues. Others were soon found who imitated, from motives of distrust, the example which had been set by De Conti in revenge. The more acute stockjobbers imagined justly that prices could not continue to rise for ever. Bourdon and La Richardière, renowned for their extensive operations in the funds, quietly and in small quantities at a time, converted their notes into specie, and sent it away to foreign countries. They also bought as much as they could conveniently carry of plate and expensive jewellery, and sent it secretly away to England or to Holland. Vermalet, a jobber, who sniffed the coming storm, procured gold and silver coin to the amount of nearly a million of livres, which he packed in a farmer's cart, and covered over with hay and cow-dung. He then disguised himself in the dirty smock-frock, or *blouse*, of a peasant, and drove his precious load in safety into Belgium. From thence he soon found means to transport it to Amsterdam.

Hitherto no difficulty had been experienced by any class in procuring specie for their wants. But this system could not long be carried on without causing a scarcity. The voice of complaint was heard on

every side, and inquiries being instituted, the cause was soon discovered. The council debated long on the remedies to be taken, and Law, being called on for his advice, was of opinion, that an edict should be published, depreciating the value of coin five per cent. below that of paper. The edict was published accordingly; but, failing of its intended effect, was followed by another, in which the depreciation was increased to ten per cent. The payments of the bank were at the same time restricted to one hundred livres in gold, and ten in silver. All these measures were nugatory to restore confidence in the paper, though the restriction of cash payments within limits so extremely narrow kept up the credit of the Bank.

Notwithstanding every effort to the contrary, the precious metals continued to be conveyed to England and Holland. The little coin that was left in the country was carefully treasured, or hidden until the scarcity became so great, that the operations of trade could no longer be carried on. In this emergency, Law hazarded the bold experiment of forbidding the use of specie altogether. In February 1720 an edict was published, which, instead of restoring the credit of the paper, as was intended, destroyed it irrecoverably, and drove the country to the very brink of revolution. By this famous edict it was forbidden to any person whatever to have more than five hundred livres (20*l.*) of coin in his possession, under pain of a heavy

fine, and confiscation of the sums found. It was also forbidden to buy up jewellery, plate, and precious stones, and informers were encouraged to make search for offenders, by the promise of one-half the amount they might discover. The whole country sent up a cry of distress at this unheard-of tyranny. The most odious persecution daily took place. The privacy of families was violated by the intrusion of informers and their agents. The most virtuous and honest were denounced for the crime of having been seen with a *louis d'or* in their possession. Servants betrayed their masters, one citizen became a spy upon his neighbour, and arrests and confiscations so multiplied, that the courts found a difficulty in getting through the immense increase of business thus occasioned. It was sufficient for an informer to say that he suspected any person of concealing money in his house, and immediately a search-warrant was granted. Lord Stair, the English ambassador, said, that it was now impossible to doubt of the sincerity of Law's conversion to the Catholic religion; he had established the *inquisition*, after having given abundant evidence of his faith in *transubstantiation*, by turning so much gold into paper.

Every epithet that popular hatred could suggest was showered upon the Regent and the unhappy Law. Coin, to any amount above five hundred livres, was an illegal tender, and nobody would

take paper if he could help it. No one knew to-day what his notes would be worth to-morrow. "Never," says Duclos, in his Secret Memoirs of the Regency, "was seen a more capricious government — never was a more frantic tyranny exercised by hands less firm. It is inconceivable to those who were witnesses of the horrors of those times, and who look back upon them now as on a dream, that a sudden revolution did not break out—that Law and the Regent did not perish by a tragical death. They were both held in horror, but the people confined themselves to complaints; a sombre and timid despair, a stupid consternation, had seized upon all, and men's minds were too vile even to be capable of a courageous crime." It would appear that, at one time, a movement of the people was organised. Seditious writings were posted up against the walls, and were sent, in hand-bills, to the houses of the most conspicuous people. One of them, given in the "Mémoires de la Régence," was to the following effect:—"Sir and Madam,—This is to give you notice that a St. Bartholomew's Day will be enacted again on Saturday and Sunday, if affairs do not alter. You are desired not to stir out, nor you, nor your servants. God preserve you from the flames! Give notice to your neighbours. Dated Saturday, May 25th, 1720." The immense number of spies with which the city was infested rendered the people mistrustful of one another, and beyond some

trifling disturbances made in the evening by an insignificant group, which was soon dispersed, the peace of the capital was not compromised.

The value of shares in the Louisiana, or Mississippi stock, had fallen very rapidly, and few indeed were found to believe the tales that had once been told of the immense wealth of that region. A last effort was therefore tried to restore the public confidence in the Mississippi project. For this purpose, a general conscription of all the poor wretches in Paris was made by order of government. Upwards of six thousand of the very refuse of the population were impressed, as if in time of war, and were provided with clothes and tools to be embarked for New Orleans, to work in the gold mines alleged to abound there. They were paraded day after day through the streets with their pikes and shovels, and then sent off in small detachments to the out-ports to be shipped for America. Two-thirds of them never reached their destination, but dispersed themselves over the country, sold their tools for what they could get, and returned to their old course of life. In less than three weeks afterwards, one-half of them were to be found again in Paris. The manœuvre, however, caused a trifling advance in Mississippi stock. Many persons of superabundant gullibility believed that operations had begun in earnest in the new Golconda, and that gold and silver ingots would again be found in France.

In a constitutional monarchy some surer means would have been found for the restoration of public credit. In England, at a subsequent period, when a similar delusion had brought on similar distress, how different were the measures taken to repair the evil; but in France, unfortunately, the remedy was left to the authors of the mischief. The arbitrary will of the Regent, which endeavoured to extricate the country, only plunged it deeper into the mire. All payments were ordered to be made in paper, and between the 1st of February and the end of May, notes were fabricated to the amount of upwards of 1500 millions of livres, or 60,000,000*l.* sterling. But the alarm once sounded, no art could make the people feel the slightest confidence in paper which was not exchangeable into metal. M. Lambert, the President of the Parliament of Paris, told the Regent to his face that he would rather have a hundred thousand livres in gold or silver than five millions in the notes of his bank. When such was the general feeling, the superabundant issues of paper but increased the evil, by rendering still more enormous the disparity between the amount of specie and notes in circulation. Coin, which it was the object of the Regent to depreciate, rose in value on every fresh attempt to diminish it. In February, it was judged advisable that the Royal Bank should be incorporated with the Company of the Indies. An edict to that effect was published and registered by the Parliament. The

state remained the guarantee for the notes of the bank, and no more were to be issued without an order in council. All the profits of the bank, since the time it had been taken out of Law's hands and made a national institution, were given over by the Regent to the Company of the Indies. This measure had the effect of raising for a short time the value of the Louisiana and other shares of the company, but it failed in placing public credit on any permanent basis.

A council of state was held in the beginning of May, at which Law, D'Argenson (his colleague in the administration of the finances), and all the ministers were present. It was then computed that the total amount of notes in circulation was 2600 millions of livres, while the coin in the country was not quite equal to half that amount. It was evident to the majority of the council that some plan must be adopted to equalise the currency. Some proposed that the notes should be reduced to the value of the specie, while others proposed that the nominal value of the specie should be raised till it was on an equality with the paper. Law is said to have opposed both these projects, but failing in suggesting any other, it was agreed that the notes should be depreciated one-half. On the 21st of May, an edict was accordingly issued, by which it was decreed that the shares of the Company of the Indies, and the notes of the bank, should gradually diminish in value, till at the end

of a year they should only pass current for one-half of their nominal worth. The Parliament refused to register the edict—the greatest outcry was excited, and the state of the country became so alarming, that, as the only means of preserving tranquillity, the council of the regency was obliged to stultify its own proceedings, by publishing within seven days another edict, restoring the notes to their original value.

On the same day (the 27th of May) the bank stopped payment in specie. Law and D'Argenson were both dismissed from the ministry. The weak, vacillating, and cowardly Regent threw the blame of all the mischief upon Law, who, upon presenting himself at the Palais Royal, was refused admittance. At nightfall, however, he was sent for, and admitted into the palace by a secret door,* when the Regent endeavoured to console him, and made all manner of excuses for the severity with which in public he had been compelled to treat him. So capricious was his conduct, that, two days afterwards, he took him publicly to the opera, where he sat in the royal box, alongside of the Regent, who treated him with marked consideration in face of all the people. But such was the hatred against Law that the experiment had well nigh proved fatal to him. The mob assailed his carriage with stones just as he was entering his own door; and if the coachman had not made a sudden jerk into

* Duclos, Mémoires Secrets de la Régence.

the court-yard, and the domestics closed the gate immediately, he would, in all probability, have been dragged out and torn to pieces. On the following day, his wife and daughter were also assailed by the mob as they were returning in their carriage from the races. When the Regent was informed of these occurrences he sent Law a strong detachment of Swiss guards, who were stationed night and day in the court of his residence. The public indignation at last increased so much, that Law, finding his own house, even with this guard, insecure, took refuge in the Palais Royal, in the apartments of the Regent.

The Chancellor, D'Aguesseau, who had been dismissed in 1718 for his opposition to the projects of Law, was now recalled to aid in the restoration of credit. The Regent acknowledged too late, that he had treated with unjustifiable harshness and mistrust one of the ablest, and perhaps the sole honest public man of that corrupt period. He had retired ever since his disgrace to his country-house at Fresnes, where, in the midst of severe but delightful philosophic studies, he had forgotten the intrigues of an unworthy court. Law himself, and the Chevalier de Conflans, a gentleman of the Regent's household, were despatched in a post-chaise, with orders to bring the ex-chancellor to Paris along with them. D'Aguesseau consented to render what assistance he could, contrary to the advice of his friends,

who did not approve that he should accept any recall to office of which Law was the bearer. On his arrival in Paris, five counsellors of the Parliament were admitted to confer with the Commissary of Finance, and on the 1st of June an order was published, abolishing the law which made it criminal to amass coin to the amount of more than five hundred livres. Every one was permitted to have as much specie as he pleased. In order that the bank-notes might be withdrawn, twenty-five millions of new notes were created, on the security of the revenues of the city of Paris, at two-and-a-half per cent. The bank-notes withdrawn were publicly burned in front of the Hôtel de Ville. The new notes were principally of the value of ten livres each; and on the 10th of June the bank was re-opened, with a sufficiency of silver coin to give in change for them.

These measures were productive of considerable advantage. All the population of Paris hastened to the bank, to get coin for their small notes; and silver becoming scarce, they were paid in copper. Very few complained that this was too heavy, although poor fellows might be continually seen toiling and sweating along the streets, laden with more than they could comfortably carry, in the shape of change for fifty livres. The crowds around the bank were so great, that hardly a day passed that some one was not pressed to death. On the 9th of July, the multitude was so dense and clamorous

that the guards stationed at the entrance of the Mazarin Gardens closed the gate, and refused to admit any more. The crowd became incensed, and flung stones through the railings upon the soldiers. The latter, incensed in their turn, threatened to fire upon the people. At that instant one of them was hit by a stone, and, taking up his piece, he fired into the crowd. One man fell dead immediately, and another was severely wounded. It was every instant expected that a general attack would have been commenced upon the bank; but the gates of the Mazarin Gardens being opened to the crowd, who saw a whole troop of soldiers, with their bayonets fixed, ready to receive them, they contented themselves by giving vent to their indignation in groans and hisses.

Eight days afterwards the concourse of people was so tremendous, that fifteen persons were squeezed to death at the doors of the bank. The people were so indignant that they took three of the bodies on stretchers before them, and proceeded, to the number of seven or eight thousand, to the gardens of the Palais Royal, that they might show the Regent the misfortunes that he and Law had brought upon the country. Law's coachman, who was sitting on the box of his master's carriage, in the court-yard of the palace, happened to have more zeal than discretion, and, not liking that the mob should abuse his master, he said, loud enough to be overheard by several

persons, that they were all blackguards, and deserved to be hanged. The mob immediately set upon him, and, thinking that Law was in the carriage, broke it to pieces. The imprudent coachman narrowly escaped with his life. No further mischief was done; a body of troops making their appearance, the crowd quietly dispersed, after an assurance had been given by the Regent that the three bodies they had brought to show him should be decently buried at his own expense. The Parliament was sitting at the time of this uproar, and the President took upon himself to go out and see what was the matter. On his return he informed the councillors, that Law's carriage had been broken by the mob. All the members rose simultaneously, and expressed their joy by a loud shout, while one man, more zealous in his hatred than the rest, exclaimed, "*And Law himself, is* he *torn to pieces?*"*

Much undoubtedly depended on the credit of the Company of the Indies, which was answerable for so great a sum to the nation. It was, therefore, suggested in the council of the ministry, that any privileges which could be granted to

* The Duchess of Orleans gives a different version of this story; but whichever be the true one, the manifestation of such feeling in a legislative assembly was not very creditable. She says, that the President was so transported with joy, that he was seized with a rhyming fit, and, returning into the hall, exclaimed to the members:—

"*Messieurs! Messieurs! bonne nouvelle!*
Le carrosse de Lass est reduit en canelle!"

enable it to fulfil its engagements, would be productive of the best results. With this end in view, it was proposed that the exclusive privilege of all maritime commerce should be secured to it, and an edict to that effect was published. But it was unfortunately forgotten that by such a measure all the merchants of the country would be ruined. The idea of such an immense privilege was generally scouted by the nation, and petition on petition was presented to the Parliament, that they would refuse to register the decree. They refused accordingly, and the Regent, remarking that they did nothing but fan the flame of sedition, exiled them to Blois. At the intercession of D'Aguesseau, the place of banishment was changed to Pontoise, and thither accordingly the councillors repaired, determined to set the Regent at defiance. They made every arrangement for rendering their temporary exile as agreeable as possible. The President gave the most elegant suppers, to which he invited all the gayest and wittiest company of Paris. Every night there was a concert and ball for the ladies. The usually grave and solemn judges and councillors joined in cards and other diversions, leading for several weeks a life of the most extravagant pleasure, for no other purpose than to show the Regent of how little consequence they deemed their banishment, and that when they willed it, they could make Pontoise a pleasanter residence than Paris.

Of all the nations in the world the French are the most renowned for singing over their grievances. Of that country it has been remarked with some truth, that its whole history may be traced in its songs. When Law, by the utter failure of his best-laid plans, rendered himself obnoxious, satire of course seized hold upon him, and, while caricatures of his person appeared in all the shops, the streets resounded with songs, in which neither he nor the Regent was spared. Many of these songs were far from decent; and one of them in particular counselled the application of all his notes to the most ignoble use to which paper can be applied. But the following, preserved in the letters of the Duchess of Orleans, was the best and the most popular, and was to be heard for months in all the *carrefours* of Paris. The application of the chorus is happy enough :—

Aussitôt que Lass arriva
Dans notre bonne ville,
Monsieur le Régent publia
Que Lass serait utile
Pour rétablir la nation.
La faridondaine! la faridondon.
Mais il nous a tous enrichi,
Biribi!
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami!

Ce parpaillot, pour attirer
Tout l'argent de la France,
Songea d'abord à s'assurer
De notre confiance.

Il fit son abjuration.
La faridondaine ! la faridondon !
Mais le fourbe s'est converti,
Biribi !
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami !

Lass, le fils ainé de Satan
Nous met tous à l'aumône,
Il nous a pris tout notre argent
Et n'en rend à personne.
Mais le Régent, humain et bon,
La faridondaine ! la faridondon !
Nous rendra ce qu'on nous a pris,
Biribi !
A la façon de Barbari,
Mon ami !

The following smart epigram is of the same date :—

Lundi, j'achetai des actions ;
Mardi, je gagnai des millions ;
Mercredi, j'arrangeai mon ménage,
Jeudi, je pris un équipage,
Vendredi, je m'en fus au bal,
Et Samedi, à l'Hôpital.

Among the caricatures that were abundantly published, and that showed as plainly as graver matters, that the nation had awakened to a sense of its folly, was one, a fac-simile of which is preserved in the "Mémoires de la Régence." It was thus described by its author: "The 'Goddess of Shares,' in her triumphal car, driven by the Goddess of Folly. Those who are drawing the car are impersonations of the Mississippi, with his wooden

leg, the South Sea, the Bank of England, the Company of the West of Senegal, and of various assurances. Lest the car should not roll fast enough, the agents of these companies, known by their long fox-tails and their cunning looks, turn round the spokes of the wheels, upon which are marked the names of the several stocks, and their value, sometimes high and sometimes low, according to the turns of the wheel. Upon the ground are the merchandise, day-books and ledgers of legitimate commerce, crushed under the chariot of Folly. Behind is an immense crowd of persons, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, clamoring after Fortune, and fighting with each other to get a portion of the shares which she distributes so bountifully among them. In the clouds sits a demon, blowing bubbles of soap, which are also the objects of the admiration and cupidity of the crowd, who jump upon one another's backs to reach them ere they burst. Right in the pathway of the car, and blocking up the passage, stands a large building, with three doors, through one of which it must pass, if it proceeds further, and all the crowd along with it. Over the first door are the words, "*Hôpital des Foux*," over the second, "*Hôpital des Malades*," and over the third, "*Hôpital des Gueux*." Another caricature represented Law sitting in a large cauldron, boiling over the flames of popular madness, surrounded by an impetuous multitude, who were pouring all their gold and silver into it, and re-

ceiving gladly in exchange the bits of paper which he distributed among them by handsfull.

While this excitement lasted, Law took good care not to expose himself unguarded in the streets. Shut up in the apartments of the Regent, he was secure from all attack, and, whenever he ventured abroad, it was either *incognito,* or in one of the Royal carriages, with a powerful escort. An amusing anecdote is recorded of the detestation in which he was held by the people, and the ill treatment he would have met, had he fallen into their hands. A gentleman, of the name of Boursel, was passing in his carriage down the Rue St. Antoine, when his further progress was stayed by a hackney-coach that had blocked up the road. M. Boursel's servant called impatiently to the hackney-coachman to get out of the way, and, on his refusal, struck him a blow on the face. A crowd was soon drawn together by the disturbance, and M. Boursel got out of the carriage to restore order. The hackney-coachman, imagining that he had now another assailant, bethought him of an expedient to rid himself of both, and called out as loudly as he was able, "Help! help! murder! murder! Here are Law and his servant going to kill me! Help! help!" At this cry, the people came out of their shops, armed with sticks and other weapons, while the mob gathered stones to inflict summary vengeance upon the supposed financier. Happily for M. Boursel and his

servant, the door of the church of the Jesuits stood wide open, and, seeing the fearful odds against them, they rushed towards it with all speed. They reached the altar, pursued by the people, and would have been ill treated even there, if, finding the door open leading to the sacristy, they had not sprang through, and closed it after them. The mob were then persuaded to leave the church by the alarmed and indignant priests; and, finding M. Boursel's carriage still in the streets, they vented their ill-will against it, and did it considerable damage.

The twenty-five millions secured on the municipal revenues of the city of Paris, bearing so low an interest as two and a half per cent., were not very popular among the large holders of Mississippi stock. The conversion of the securities was, therefore, a work of considerable difficulty; for many preferred to retain the falling paper of Law's Company, in the hope that a favourable turn might take place. On the 15th of August, with a view to hasten the conversion, an edict was passed, declaring that all notes for sums between one thousand and ten thousand livres, should not pass current, except for the purchase of annuities and bank accounts, or for the payment of instalments still due on the shares of the company.

In October following another edict was passed, depriving these notes of all value whatever after the month of November next ensuing. The ma-

nagement of the mint, the farming of the revenue, and all the other advantages and privileges of the India, or Mississippi Company, were taken from them, and they were reduced to a mere private company. This was the deathblow to the whole system, which had now got into the hands of its enemies. Law had lost all influence in the Council of Finance, and the company, being despoiled of its immunities, could no longer hold out the shadow of a prospect of being able to fulfil its engagements. All those suspected of illegal profits at the time the public delusion was at its height, were sought out and amerced in heavy fines. It was previously ordered that a list of the original proprietors should be made out, and that such persons as still retained their shares should place them in deposit with the company, and that those who had neglected to complete the shares for which they had put down their names, should now purchase them of the company, at the rate of 13,500 livres for each share of 500 livres. Rather than submit to pay this enormous sum for stock which was actually at a discount, the shareholders packed up all their portable effects, and endeavoured to find a refuge in foreign countries. Orders were immediately issued to the authorities at the ports and frontiers, to apprehend all travellers who sought to leave the kingdom, and keep them in custody, until it was ascertained whether they had any plate or jewellery with them, or were con-

cerned in the late stock-jobbing. Against such few as escaped, the punishment of death was recorded, while the most arbitrary proceedings were instituted against those who remained.

Law himself, in a moment of despair, determined to leave a country where his life was no longer secure. He at first only demanded permission to retire from Paris to one of his country-seats; a permission which the Regent cheerfully granted. The latter was much affected at the unhappy turn affairs had taken, but his faith continued unmoved in the truth and efficacy of Law's financial system. His eyes were opened to his own errors, and during the few remaining years of his life, he constantly longed for an opportunity of again establishing the system upon a securer basis. At Law's last interview with the Prince, he is reported to have said—"I confess that I have committed many faults; I committed them because I am a man, and all men are liable to error; but I declare to you most solemnly that none of them proceeded from wicked or dishonest motives, and that nothing of the kind will be found in the whole course of my conduct."

Two or three days after his departure the Regent sent him a very kind letter, permitting him to leave the kingdom whenever he pleased, and stating that he had ordered his passports to be made ready. He at the same time offered him any sum of money he might require. Law respect-

fully declined the money, and set out for Brussels in a postchaise belonging to Madame de Prie, the mistress of the Duke of Bourbon, escorted by six horse-guards. From thence he proceeded to Venice, where he remained for some months, the object of the greatest curiosity to the people, who believed him to be the possessor of enormous wealth. No opinion, however, could be more erroneous. With more generosity than could have been expected from a man who during the greatest part of his life had been a professed gambler, he had refused to enrich himself at the expense of a ruined nation. During the height of the popular frenzy for Mississippi stock, he had never doubted of the final success of his projects, in making France the richest and most powerful nation of Europe. He invested all his gains in the purchase of landed property in France — a sure proof of his own belief in the stability of his schemes. He had hoarded no plate or jewellery, and sent no money, like the dishonest jobbers, to foreign countries. His all, with the exception of one diamond, worth about five or six thousand pounds sterling, was invested in the French soil; and when he left that country, he left it almost a beggar. This fact alone ought to rescue his memory from the charge of knavery, so often and so unjustly brought against him.

As soon as his departure was known, all his estates and his valuable library were confiscated. Among the rest, an annuity of 200,000 livres,

(8000*l.* sterling,) on the lives of his wife and children, which had been purchased for five millions of livres, was forfeited, notwithstanding that a special edict, drawn up for the purpose in the days of his prosperity, had expressly declared that it should never be confiscated for any cause whatever. Great discontent existed among the people that Law had been suffered to escape. The mob and the Parliament would have been pleased to have seen him hanged. The few who had not suffered by the commercial revolution, rejoiced that the *quack* had left the country; but all those (and they were by far the most numerous class) whose fortunes were implicated, regretted that his intimate knowledge of the distress of the country, and of the causes that had led to it, had not been rendered more available in discovering a remedy.

At a meeting of the Council of Finance, and the general council of the Regency, documents were laid upon the table, from which it appeared that the amount of notes in circulation was 2700 millions. The Regent was called upon to explain how it happened that there was a discrepancy between the dates at which these issues were made, and those of the edicts by which they were authorised. He might have safely taken the whole blame upon himself, but he preferred that an absent man should bear a share of it, and he therefore stated that Law, upon his own authority, had issued 1200 millions of notes at different times,

and that he (the Regent) seeing that the thing had been irrevocably done, had screened Law, by antedating the decrees of the council, which authorised the augmentation. It would have been more to his credit if he had told the whole truth while he was about it, and acknowledged that it was mainly through his extravagance and impatience that Law had been induced to overstep the bounds of safe speculation. It was also ascertained that the national debt, on the 1st of January, 1721, amounted to upwards of 3100 millions of livres, or more than 124,000,000*l.* sterling, the interest upon which was 3,196,000*l.* A commission, or *visa,* was forthwith appointed to examine into all the securities of the state creditors, who were to be divided into five classes, the first four comprising those who had purchased their securities with real effects, and the latter comprising those who could give no proofs that the transactions they had entered into were real and *bonâ fide.* The securities of the latter were ordered to be destroyed, while those of the first four classes were subjected to a most rigid and jealous scrutiny. The result of the labours of the *visa* was a report, in which they counselled the reduction of the interest upon these securities to fifty-six millions of livres. They justified this advice by a statement of the various acts of peculation and extortion which they had discovered, and an edict to that effect was accordingly published and duly registered by the parliaments of the kingdom.

Another tribunal was afterwards established, under the title of the *Chambre de l'Arsenal,* which took cognizance of all the malversations committed in the financial departments of the government during the late unhappy period. A Master of Requests, named Falhonet, together with the Abbé Clement, and two clerks in their employ, had been concerned in divers acts of peculation, to the amount of upwards of a million of livres. The first two were sentenced to be beheaded, and the latter to be hanged; but their punishment was afterwards commuted into imprisonment for life in the Bastile. Numerous other acts of dishonesty were discovered, and punished by fine and imprisonment.

D'Argenson shared with Law and the Regent the unpopularity which had alighted upon all those concerned in the Mississippi madness. He was dismissed from his post of Chancellor, to make room for D'Aguesseau; but he retained the title of Keeper of the Seals, and was allowed to attend the councils whenever he pleased. He thought it better, however, to withdraw from Paris, and live for a time a life of seclusion at his country-seat. But he was not formed for retirement, and becoming moody and discontented, he aggravated a disease under which he had long laboured, and died in less than a twelvemonth. The populace of of Paris so detested him, that they carried their hatred even to his grave. As his funeral proces-

sion passed to the church of St. Nicholas du Chardonneret, the burying-place of his family, it was beset by a riotous mob, and his two sons, who were following as chief-mourners, were obliged to drive as fast as they were able down a by-street to escape personal violence.

As regards Law, he for some time entertained a hope that he should be recalled to France, to aid in establishing its credit upon a firmer basis. The death of the Regent, in 1723, who expired suddenly, as he was sitting by the fireside conversing with his mistress, the Duchess de Phalaris, deprived him of that hope, and he was reduced to lead his former life of gambling. He was more than once obliged to pawn his diamond, the sole remnant of his vast wealth, but successful play generally enabled him to redeem it. Being persecuted by his creditors at Rome, he proceeded to Copenhagen, where he received permission from the English ministry to reside in his native country, his pardon for the murder of Mr. Wilson having been sent over to him in 1719. He was brought over in the admiral's ship, a circumstance which gave occasion for a short debate in the House of Lords. Earl Coningsby complained that a man, who had renounced both his country and his religion, should have been treated with such honour, and expressed his belief that his presence in England, at a time when the people were so bewildered by the nefarious practices of the South

Sea directors, would be attended with no little danger. He gave notice of a motion on the subject; but it was allowed to drop, no other member of the House having the slightest participation in his lordship's fears. Law remained for about four years in England, and then proceeded to Venice, where he died in 1729, in very embarrassed circumstances. The following epitaph was written at the time :—

" Ci gît cet Ecossais célébre,
Ce calculateur sans égal,
Qui, par les regles de l'algébre,
A mis la France à l'Hôpital."

His brother, William Law, who had been concerned with him in the administration both of the Bank and the Louisiana Company, was imprisoned in the Bastile for alleged malversation, but no guilt was ever proved against him. He was liberated after fifteen months, and became the founder of a family, which is still known in France under the title of Marquises of Lauriston.

In the next chapter will be found an account of the madness which infected the people of England at the same time, and under very similar circumstances, but which, thanks to the energies and good sense of a constitutional government, was attended with results far less disastrous than those which were seen in France.

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.

At length corruption, like a general flood,
Did deluge all, and avarice creeping on,
Spread, like a low-born mist, and hid the sun.
Statesmen and patriots plied alike the stocks,
Peeress and butler shared alike the box;
And judges jobbed, and bishops bit the town,
And mighty dukes packed cards for half-a-crown:
Britain was sunk in lucre's sordid charms.—POPE.

THE South Sea Company was originated by the celebrated Harley, Earl of Oxford, in the year 1711, with the view of restoring public credit, which had suffered by the dismissal of the Whig ministry, and of providing for the discharge of the army and navy debentures, and other parts of the floating debt, amounting to nearly ten millions sterling. A company of merchants, at that time without a name, took this debt upon themselves, and the government agreed to secure them, for a certain period, the interest of six per cent. To provide for this interest, amounting to 600,000*l.* per annum, the duties upon wines, vinegar, India goods, wrought silks, tobacco, whale-fins, and some other articles, were rendered permanent. The monopoly of the trade to the South Seas was granted, and the company, being incorporated by

Act of Parliament, assumed the title by which it has ever since been known. The minister took great credit to himself for his share in this transaction, and the scheme was always called by his flatterers "the Earl of Oxford's masterpiece."

Even at this early period of its history, the most visionary ideas were formed by the company and the public of the immense riches of the eastern coast of South America. Everybody had heard of the gold and silver mines of Peru and Mexico; every one believed them to be inexhaustible, and that it was only necessary to send the manufactures of England to the coast, to be repaid a hundredfold in gold and silver ingots by the natives. A report, industriously spread, that Spain was willing to concede four ports, on the coasts of Chili and Peru, for the purposes of traffic, increased the general confidence; and for many years the South Sea Company's stock was in high favour.

Philip V. of Spain, however, never had any intention of admitting the English to a free trade in the ports of Spanish America. Negotiations were set on foot, but their only result was the *assiento* contract, or the privilege of supplying the colonies with negroes for thirty years, and of sending once a year a vessel, limited both as to tonnage and value of cargo, to trade with Mexico, Peru, or Chili. The latter permission was only granted upon the hard condition, that the King of Spain should enjoy one-fourth of the profits, and a tax of

five per cent. on the remainder. This was a great disappointment to the Earl of Oxford and his party, who were reminded much oftener than they found agreeable of the

"*Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus.*"

But the public confidence in the South Sea Company was not shaken. The Earl of Oxford declared, that Spain would permit two ships, in addition to the annual ship, to carry out merchandise during the first year; and a list was published, in which all the ports and harbours of these coasts were pompously set forth as open to the trade of Great Britain. The first voyage of the annual ship was not made till the year 1717, and in the following year the trade was suppressed by the rupture with Spain.

The King's speech, at the opening of the session of 1717, made pointed allusion to the state of public credit, and recommended that proper measures should be taken to reduce the national debt. The two great monetary corporations, the South Sea Company and the Bank of England, made proposals to Parliament on the 20th of May ensuing. The South Sea Company prayed that their capital stock of ten millions might be increased to twelve, by subscription or otherwise, and offered to accept five per cent. instead of six upon the whole amount. The Bank made proposals equally advantageous. The House debated for some time, and finally

three acts were passed, called the South Sea Act, the Bank Act, and the General Fund Act. By the first, the proposals of the South Sea Company were accepted, and that body held itself ready to advance the sum of two millions towards discharging the principal and interest of the debt due by the state for the four lottery funds of the ninth and tenth years of Queen Anne. By the second act, the Bank received a lower rate of interest for the sum of 1,775,027*l.* 15*s.* due to it by the state, and agreed to deliver up to be cancelled as many Exchequer bills as amounted to two millions sterling, and to accept of an annuity of one hundred thousand pounds, being after the rate of five per cent., the whole redeemable at one year's notice. They were further required to be ready to advance, in case of need, a sum not exceeding 2,500,000*l.* upon the same terms of five per cent. interest, redeemable by Parliament. The General Fund Act recited the various deficiencies, which were to be made good by the aids derived from the foregoing sources.

The name of the South Sea Company was thus continually before the public. Though their trade with the South American States produced little or no augmentation of their revenues, they continued to flourish as a monetary corporation. Their stock was in high request, and the directors, buoyed up with success, began to think of new means for extending their influence. The Mississippi scheme of John

Law, which so dazzled and captivated the French people, inspired them with an idea that they could carry on the same game in England. The anticipated failure of his plans did not divert them from their intention. Wise in their own conceit, they imagined they could avoid his faults, carry on their schemes for ever, and stretch the cord of credit to its extremest tension, without causing it to snap asunder.

It was while Law's plan was at its greatest height of popularity, while people were crowding in thousands to the Rue Quincampoix, and ruining themselves with frantic eagerness, that the South Sea directors laid before Parliament their famous plan for paying off the national debt. Visions of boundless wealth floated before the fascinated eyes of the people in the two most celebrated countries of Europe. The English commenced their career of extravagance somewhat later than the French; but as soon as the delirium seized them, they were determined not to be outdone. Upon the 22nd of January 1720, the House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration that part of the King's speech at the opening of the session which related to the public debts, and the proposal of the South Sea Company towards the redemption and sinking of the same. The proposal set forth at great length, and under several heads, the debts of the state,

amounting to 30,981,712*l.* which the Company were anxious to take upon themselves, upon consideration of five per cent. per annum, secured to them until Midsummer 1727; after which time, the whole was to become redeemable at the pleasure of the legislature, and the interest to be reduced to four per cent. The proposal was received with great favour; but the Bank of England had many friends in the House of Commons, who were desirous that that body should share in the advantages that were likely to accrue. On behalf of this corporation it was represented, that they had performed great and eminent services to the state, in the most difficult times, and deserved, at least, that if any advantage was to be made by public bargains of this nature, they should be preferred before a company that had never done any thing for the nation. The further consideration of the matter was accordingly postponed for five days. In the mean time, a plan was drawn up by the Governors of the Bank. The South Sea Company, afraid that the Bank might offer still more advantageous terms to the government than themselves, reconsidered their former proposal, and made some alterations in it, which they hoped would render it more acceptable. The principal change was a stipulation that the government might redeem these debts at the expiration of four years, instead of seven, as at first suggested. The

Bank resolved not to be outbidden in this singular auction, and the Governors also reconsidered their first proposal, and sent in a new one.

Thus, each corporation having made two proposals, the House began to deliberate. Mr. Robert Walpole was the chief speaker in favour of the Bank, and Mr. Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the principal advocate on behalf of the South Sea Company. It was resolved, on the 2nd of February, that the proposals of the latter were most advantageous to the country. They were accordingly received, and leave was given to bring in a bill to that effect.

Exchange Alley was in a fever of excitement. The Company's stock, which had been at a hundred and thirty the previous day, gradually rose to three hundred, and continued to rise with the most astonishing rapidity during the whole time that the bill in its several stages was under discussion. Mr. Walpole was almost the only statesman in the House who spoke out boldly against it. He warned them, in eloquent and solemn language, of the evils that would ensue. It countenanced, he said, "the dangerous practice of stockjobbing, and would divert the genius of the nation from trade and industry. It would hold out a dangerous lure to decoy the unwary to their ruin, by making them part with the earnings of their labour for a prospect of imaginary wealth. The great principle of the project was an evil of first-rate magnitude; it was

to raise artificially the value of the stock, by exciting and keeping up a general infatuation, and by promising dividends out of funds which could never be adequate to the purpose. In a prophetic spirit he added, that if the plan succeeded, the directors would become masters of the government, form a new and absolute aristocracy in the kingdom, and control the resolutions of the legislature. If it failed, which he was convinced it would, the result would bring general discontent and ruin upon the country. Such would be the delusion, that when the evil day came, as come it would, the people would start up, as from a dream, and ask themselves if these things could have been true. All his eloquence was in vain. He was looked upon as a false prophet, or compared to the hoarse raven, croaking omens of evil. His friends, however, compared him to Cassandra, predicting evils which would only be believed when they came home to men's hearths, and stared them in the face at their own boards. Although, in former times, the House had listened with the utmost attention to every word that fell from his lips, the benches became deserted when it was known that he would speak on the South Sea question.

The bill was two months in its progress through the House of Commons. During this time every exertion was made by the directors and their friends, and more especially by the Chairman, the noted Sir John Blunt, to raise the price of the

stock. The most extravagant rumours were in circulation. Treaties between England and Spain were spoken of, whereby the latter was to grant a free trade to all her colonies; and the rich produce of the mines of Potosi-la-Paz was to be brought to England until silver should become almost as plentiful as iron. For cotton and woollen goods, with which we could supply them in abundance, the dwellers in Mexico were to empty their golden mines. The company of merchants trading to the South Seas would be the richest the world ever saw, and every hundred pounds invested in it would produce hundreds per annum to the stockholder. At last the stock was raised by these means to near four hundred; but, after fluctuating a good deal, settled at three hundred and thirty, at which price it remained when the bill passed the Commons by a majority of 172 against 55.

In the House of Lords the bill was hurried through all its stages with unexampled rapidity. On the 4th of April it was read a first time; on the 5th, it was read a second time; on the 6th, it was committed; and on the 7th, was read a third time, and passed.

Several peers spoke warmly against the scheme; but their warnings fell upon dull, cold ears. A speculating frenzy had seized them as well as the plebeians. Lord North and Grey said the bill was unjust in its nature, and might prove fatal in its consequences, being calculated to enrich the few and impoverish the many. The Duke of Wharton

followed; but, as he only retailed at second-hand the arguments so eloquently stated by Walpole in the Lower House, he was not listened to with even the same attention that had been bestowed upon Lord North and Grey. Earl Cowper followed on the same side, and compared the bill to the famous horse of the siege of Troy. Like that, it was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but bore within it treachery and destruction. The Earl of Sunderland endeavoured to answer all objections; and, on the question being put, there appeared only seventeen peers against, and eighty-three in favour of the project. The very same day on which it passed the Lords, it received the Royal assent, and became the law of the land.

It seemed at that time as if the whole nation had turned stockjobbers. Exchange Alley was every day blocked up by crowds, and Cornhill was impassable for the number of carriages. Everybody came to purchase stock. "Every fool aspired to be a knave." In the words of a ballad, published at the time, and sung about the streets,*

> Then stars and garters did appear
> Among the meaner rabble;
> To buy and sell, to see and hear,
> The Jews and Gentiles squabble.

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* "A South Sea Ballad; or, Merry Remarks upon Exchange Alley Bubbles. To a new tune, called 'The Grand Elixir; or, the Philosopher's Stone Discovered.'"

The greatest ladies thither came,
And plied in chariots daily,
Or pawned their jewels for a sum
To venture in the Alley.

* * * *

The inordinate thirst of gain that had afflicted all ranks of society, was not to be slaked even in the South Sea. Other schemes, of the most extravagant kind, were started. The share-lists were speedily filled up, and an enormous traffic carried on in shares, while, of course, every means were resorted to, to raise them to an artificial value in the market.

Contrary to all expectation, South Sea stock fell when the bill received the Royal assent. On the 7th of April the shares were quoted at three hundred and ten, and on the following day, at two hundred and ninety. Already the directors had tasted the profits of their scheme, and it was not likely that they should quietly allow the stock to find its natural level, without an effort to raise it. Immediately their busy emissaries were set to work. Every person interested in the success of the project endeavoured to draw a knot of listeners around him, to whom he expatiated on the treasures of the South American seas. Exchange Alley was crowded with attentive groups. One rumour alone, asserted with the utmost confidence, had an immediate effect upon the stock. It was said, that Earl Stanhope had received overtures in France from the Spanish Government to

exchange Gibraltar and Port Mahon for some places on the coast of Peru, for the security and enlargement of the trade in the South Seas. Instead of one annual ship trading to those ports, and allowing the King of Spain twenty-five per cent. out of the profits, the Company might build and charter as many ships as they pleased, and pay no per centage whatever to any foreign potentate.

Visions of ingots danced before their eyes,

and stock rose rapidly. On the 12th of April, five days after the bill had become law, the directors opened their books for a subscription of a million, at the rate of 300*l.* for every 100*l.* capital. Such was the concourse of persons, of all ranks, that this first subscription was found to amount to above two millions of original stock. It was to be paid at five payments, of 60*l.* each for every 100*l.* In a few days the stock advanced to three hundred and forty, and the subscriptions were sold for double the price of the first payment. To raise the stock still higher, it was declared, in a general court of directors, on the 21st of April, that the midsummer dividend should be ten per cent., and that all subscriptions should be entitled to the same. These resolutions answering the end designed, the directors, to improve the infatuation of the monied men, opened their books for a second subscription of a million, at four hundred per cent. Such was the frantic eagerness of people of every class to specu-

late in these funds, that in the course of a few hours no less than a million and a half was subscribed at that rate.

In the mean time, innumerable joint-stock companies started up everywhere. They soon received the name of Bubbles, the most appropriate that imagination could devise. The populace are often most happy in the nicknames they employ. None could be more apt than that of Bubbles. Some of them lasted for a week, or a fortnight, and were no more heard of, while others could not even live out that short span of existence. Every evening produced new schemes, and every morning new projects. The highest of the aristocracy were as eager in this hot pursuit of gain as the most plodding jobber in Cornhill. The Prince of Wales became governor of one company, and is said to have cleared 40,000*l.* by his speculations.* The Duke of Bridgewater started a scheme for the improvement of London and Westminster, and the Duke of Chandos another. There were nearly a hundred different projects, each more extravagant and deceptive than the other. To use the words of the "Political State," they were "set on foot and promoted by crafty knaves, then pursued by multitudes of covetous fools, and at last appeared to be, in effect, what their vulgar appellation denoted them to be—bubbles and mere

* Coxe's Walpole, Correspondence between Mr. Secretary Craggs and Earl Stanhope.

cheats." It was computed that near one million and a half sterling was won and lost by these unwarrantable practices, to the impoverishment of many a fool, and the enriching of many a rogue.

Some of these schemes were plausible enough, and, had they been undertaken at a time when the public mind was unexcited, might have been pursued with advantage to all concerned. But they were established merely with the view of raising the shares in the market. The projectors took the first opportunity of a rise to sell out, and next morning the scheme was at an end. Maitland, in his History of London, gravely informs us, that one of the projects which received great encouragement, was for the establishment of a company "to make deal-boards out of saw-dust." This is, no doubt, intended as a joke; but there is abundance of evidence to show that dozens of schemes hardly a whit more reasonable, lived their little day, ruining hundreds ere they fell. One of them was for a wheel for perpetual motion—capital, one million; another was "for encouraging the breed of horses in England, and improving of glebe and church lands, and repairing and rebuilding parsonage and vicarage houses." Why the clergy, who were so mainly interested in the latter clause, should have taken so much interest in the first, is only to be explained on the supposition that the scheme was projected by a knot of the fox-hunting parsons, once so common in England.

The shares of this company were rapidly subscribed for. But the most absurd and preposterous of all, and which showed, more completely than any other, the utter madness of the people, was one started by an unknown adventurer, entitled "*A company for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.*" Were not the fact stated by scores of credible witnesses, it would be impossible to believe that any person could have been duped by such a project. The man of genius who essayed this bold and successful inroad upon public credulity, merely stated in his prospectus that the required capital was half a million, in five thousand shares of 100*l.* each, deposit 2*l.* per share. Each subscriber, paying his deposit, would be entitled to 100*l.* per annum per share. How this immense profit was to be obtained, he did not condescend to inform them at that time, but promised, that in a month full particulars should be duly announced, and a call made for the remaining 98*l.* of the subscription. Next morning, at nine o'clock, this great man opened an office in Cornhill. Crowds of people beset his door, and when he shut up at three o'clock, he found that no less than one thousand shares had been subscribed for, and the deposits paid. He was thus, in five hours, the winner of 2,000*l.* He was philosopher enough to be contented with his venture, and set off the same evening for the Continent. He was never heard of again.

Well might Swift exclaim, comparing Change Alley to a gulf in the South Sea,—

Subscribers here by thousands float,
And jostle one another down,
Each paddling in his leaky boat,
And here they fish for gold, and drown.

Now buried in the depths below,
Now mounted up to heaven again,
They reel and stagger to and fro,
At their wit's end, like drunken men

Meantime, secure on Garraway cliffs,
A savage race, by shipwrecks fed,
Lie waiting for the foundered skiffs,
And strip the bodies of the dead.

Another fraud that was very successful, was that of the "Globe *Permits*," as they were called. They were nothing more than square pieces of playing cards, on which was the impression of a seal, in wax, bearing the sign of the Globe Tavern, in the neighbourhood of Exchange Alley, with the inscription of "Sail Cloth Permits." The possessors enjoyed no other advantage from them than permission to subscribe, at some future time, to a new sail-cloth manufactory, projected by one who was then known to be a man of fortune, but who was afterwards involved in the peculation and punishment of the South Sea directors. These permits sold for as much as sixty guineas in the Alley.

Persons of distinction, of both sexes, were deeply engaged in all these bubbles, those of the male

sex going to taverns and coffee-houses to meet their brokers, and the ladies resorting for the same purpose to the shops of milliners and haberdashers. But it did not follow that all these people believed in the feasibility of the schemes to which they subscribed; it was enough for their purpose that their shares would, by stock-jobbing arts, be soon raised to a premium, when they got rid of them with all expedition to the really credulous. So great was the confusion of the crowd in the alley, that shares in the same bubble were known to have been sold at the same instant ten per cent. higher at one end of the alley than at the other. Sensible men beheld the extraordinary infatuation of the people with sorrow and alarm. There were some, both in and out of Parliament, who foresaw clearly the ruin that was impending. Mr. Walpole did not cease his gloomy forebodings. His fears were shared by all the thinking few, and impressed most forcibly upon the government. On the 11th of June, the day the Parliament rose, the King published a proclamation, declaring that all these unlawful projects should be deemed public nuisances, and prosecuted accordingly, and forbidding any broker, under a penalty of five hundred pounds, from buying or selling any shares in them. Notwithstanding this proclamation, roguish speculators still carried them on, and the deluded people still encouraged them. On the 12th of July, an order of the Lords Justices assembled in

privy council was published, dismissing all the petitions that had been presented for patents and charters, and dissolving all the bubble companies. The following copy of their lordships' order, containing a list of all these nefarious projects, will not be deemed uninteresting at the present day, when there is but too much tendency in the public mind to indulge in similar practices :—

> "At the Council Chamber, Whitehall, the 12th day of July, 1720. Present, their Excellencies the Lords Justices in Council.

" Their Excellencies, the Lords Justices in council, taking into consideration the many inconveniences arising to the public from several projects set on foot for raising of joint stock for various purposes, and that a great many of his Majesty's subjects have been drawn in to part with their money on pretence of assurances that their petitions for patents and charters, to enable them to carry on the same, would be granted: to prevent such impositions, their Excellencies, this day, ordered the said several petitions, together with such reports from the Board of Trade, and from his Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor General, as had been obtained thereon, to be laid before them, and after mature consideration thereof, were pleased, by advice of his Majesty's Privy Council, to order that the said petitions be dismissed, which are as follow :—

"1. Petition of several persons, praying letters patent for carrying on a fishing trade, by the name of the Grand Fishery of Great Britain.

"2. Petition of the Company of the Royal Fishery of England, praying letters patent for such further powers as will effectually contribute to carry on the said fishery.

"3. Petition of George James, on behalf of himself and divers persons of distinction concerned in a national fishery; praying letters patent of incorporation to enable them to carry on the same.

"4. Petition of several merchants, traders, and others, whose names are thereunto subscribed, praying to be incorporated for reviving and carrying on a whale fishery to Greenland and elsewhere.

"5. Petition of Sir John Lambert, and others thereto subscribing, on behalf of themselves and a great number of merchants, praying to be incorporated for carrying on a Greenland trade, and particularly a whale fishery in Davis's Straits.

"6. Another petition for a Greenland trade.

"7. Petition of several merchants, gentlemen, and citizens, praying to be incorporated for buying and building of ships to let or freight.

"8. Petition of Samuel Antrim and others, praying for letters patent for sowing hemp and flax.

"9. Petition of several merchants, masters of ships, sail-makers, and manufacturers of sail-cloth,

praying a charter of incorporation, to enable them to carry on and promote the said manufactory by a joint stock.

" 10. Petition of Thomas Boyd, and several hundred merchants, owners and masters of ships, sail-makers, weavers, and other traders, praying a charter of incorporation, empowering them to borrow money for purchasing lands, in order to the manufacturing sail-cloth and fine Holland.

" 11. Petition on behalf of several persons interested in a patent granted by the late King William and Queen Mary, for the making of linen and sail-cloth, praying that no charter may be granted to any persons whatsoever for making sail-cloth, but that the privilege now enjoyed by them may be confirmed, and likewise an additional power to carry on the cotton and cotton-silk manufactures.

" 12. Petition of several citizens, merchants, and traders in London, and others, subscribers to a British stock, for a general insurance from fire in any part of England, praying to be incorporated for carrying on the said undertaking.

" 13. Petition of several of his Majesty's loyal subjects of the city of London, and other parts of Great Britain, praying to be incorporated, for carrying on a general insurance from losses by fire within the kingdom of England.

" 14. Petition of Thomas Burges, and others his Majesty's subjects thereto subscribing, in behalf of themselves and others, subscribers to a fund of

1,200,000*l*, for carrying on a trade to his Majesty's German dominions, praying to be incorporated, by the name of the Harburg Company.

" 15. Petition of Edward Jones, a dealer in timber, on behalf of himself and others, praying to be incorporated for the importation of timber from Germany.

" 16. Petition of several merchants of London, praying a charter of incorporation for carrying on a salt-work.

" 17. Petition of Captain Macphedris, of London, merchant, on behalf of himself and several merchants, clothiers, hatters, dyers, and other traders, praying a charter of incorporation, empowering them to raise a sufficient sum of money to purchase lands for planting and rearing a wood called madder, for the use of dyers.

" 18. Petition of Joseph Galendo, of London, snuff-maker, praying a patent for his invention to prepare and cure Virginia tobacco for snuff in Virginia, and making it into the same in all his Majesty's dominions."

LIST OF BUBBLES.

The following Bubble Companies were by the same order declared to be illegal, and abolished accordingly :—

1. For the importation of Swedish iron.

2. For supplying London with sea-coal. Capital, three millions.

3. For building and rebuilding houses throughout all England. Capital, three millions.

4. For making of muslin.

5. For carrying on and improving the British alum works.

6. For effectually settling the island of Blanco and Sal Tartagus.

7. For supplying the town of Deal with fresh water.

8. For the importation of Flanders lace.

9. For improvement of lands in Great Britain. Capital, four millions.

10. For encouraging the breed of horses in England, and improving of glebe and church lands, and for repairing and rebuilding parsonage and vicarage houses.

11. For making of iron and steel in Great Britain.

12. For improving the land in the county of Flint. Capital, one million.

13. For purchasing lands to build on. Capital, two millions.

14. For trading in hair.

15. For erecting salt-works in Holy Island. Capital, two millions.

16. For buying and selling estates, and lending money on mortgage.

17. For carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is.

18. For paving the streets of London. Capital, two millions.

19. For furnishing funerals to any part of Great Britain.

20. For buying and selling lands and lending money at interest. Capital, five millions.

21. For carrying on the Royal Fishery of Great Britain. Capital, ten millions.

22. For assuring of seamen's wages.

23. For erecting loan-offices for the assistance and encouragement of the industrious. Capital, two millions.

24. For purchasing and improving leasable lands. Capital, four millions.

25. For importing pitch and tar, and other naval stores, from North Britain and America.

26. For the clothing, felt, and pantile trade.

27. For purchasing and improving a manor and royalty in Essex.

28. For insuring of horses. Capital, two millions.

29. For exporting the woollen manufacture, and importing copper, brass, and iron. Capital, four millions.

30. For a grand dispensary. Capital, three millions.

31. For erecting mills and purchasing lead mines. Capital, two millions.

32. For improving the art of making soap.

33. For a settlement on the island of Santa Cruz.

34. For sinking pits and smelting lead ore in Derbyshire.

35. For making glass bottles and other glass.

36. For a wheel for perpetual motion. Capital, one million.

37. For improving of gardens.

38. For insuring and increasing children's fortunes.

39. For entering and loading goods at the custom-house, and for negotiating business for merchants.

40. For carrying on a woollen manufacture in the north of England.

41. For importing walnut-trees from Virginia. Capital, two millions.

42. For making Manchester stuffs of thread and cotton.

43. For making Joppa and Castile soap.

44. For improving the wrought-iron and steel manufactures of this kingdom. Capital, four millions.

45. For dealing in lace, Hollands, cambrics, lawns, &c. Capital, two millions.

46. For trading in and improving certain commodities of the produce of this kingdom, &c. Capital, three millions.

47. For supplying the London markets with cattle.

48. For making looking-glasses, coach glasses, &c. Capital, two millions.

49. For working the tin and lead mines in Cornwall and Derbyshire.

50. For making rape-oil.

51. For importing beaver fur. Capital, two millions.

52. For making pasteboard and packing-paper.

53. For importing of oils and other materials used in the woollen manufacture.

54. For improving and increasing the silk manufactures.

55. For lending money on stock, annuities, tallies, &c.

56. For paying pensions to widows and others, at a small discount. Capital, two millions.

57. For improving malt liquors. Capital, four millions.

58. For a grand American fishery.

59. For purchasing and improving the fenny lands in Lincolnshire. Capital, two millions.

60. For improving the paper manufacture of Great Britain.

61. The Bottomry Company.

62. For drying malt by hot air.

63. For carrying on a trade in the river Oronooko.

64. For the more effectual making of baize, in Colchester and other parts of Great Britain.

65. For buying of naval stores, supplying the victualling, and paying the wages of the workmen.

66. For employing poor artificers, and furnishing merchants and others with watches.

67. For improvement of tillage and the breed of cattle.

68. Another for the improvement of our breed of horses.

69. Another for a horse-insurance.

70. For carrying on the corn trade of Great Britain.

71. For insuring to all masters and mistresses the losses they may sustain by servants. Capital, three millions.

72. For erecting houses or hospitals, for taking in and maintaining illegitimate children. Capital, two millions.

73. For bleaching coarse sugars, without the use of fire or loss of substance.

74. For building turnpikes and wharfs in Great Britain.

75. For insuring from thefts and robberies.

76. For extracting silver from lead.

77. For making China and Delft ware. Capital, one million.

78. For importing tobacco, and exporting it again to Sweden and the north of Europe. Capital, four millions.

79. For making iron with pit coal.

80. For furnishing the cities of London and Westminster with hay and straw. Capital, three millions.

81. For a sail and packing cloth manufactory in Ireland.

82. For taking up ballast.

83. For buying and fitting out ships to suppress pirates.

84. For the importation of timber from Wales. Capital, two millions.

85. For rock-salt.

86. For the transmutation of quicksilver into a malleable fine metal.

Besides these bubbles, many others sprang up daily, in spite of the condemnation of the Government and the ridicule of the still sane portion of the public. The print-shops teemed with caricatures, and the newspapers with epigrams and satires, upon the prevalent folly. An ingenious card-maker published a pack of South Sea playing-cards, which are now extremely rare, each card containing, besides the usual figures, of a very small size, in one corner, a caricature of a bubble company, with appropriate verses underneath. One of the most famous bubbles was "Puckle's Machine Company," for discharging round and square cannon-balls and bullets, and making a total revolution in the art of war. Its pretensions to public favour were thus summed up, on the eight of spades:—

> A rare invention to destroy the crowd
> Of fools at home, instead of fools abroad.
> Fear not, my friends, this terrible machine,
> They 're only wounded who have shares therein.

The nine of hearts was a caricature of the Eng-

lish Copper and Brass Company, with the following epigram :—

> The headlong fool that wants to be a swopper
> Of gold and silver coin for English copper,
> May, in Change Alley, prove himself an ass,
> And give rich metal for adulterate brass.

The eight of diamonds celebrated the Company for the Colonization of Acadia, with this doggrel:—

> He that is rich and wants to fool away
> A good round sum in North Amer*ica,*
> Let him subscribe himself a headlong sharer,
> And asses' ears shall honour him or bearer.

And in a similar style every card of the pack exposed some knavish scheme, and ridiculed the persons who were its dupes. It was computed that the total amount of the sums proposed for carrying on these projects was upwards of three hundred millions sterling, a sum so immense that it exceeded the value of all the lands in England at twenty years' purchase.

It is time, however, to return to the great South Sea gulf, that swallowed the fortunes of so many thousands of the avaricious and the credulous. On the 29th of May, the stock had risen as high as five hundred, and about two-thirds of the government annuitants had exchanged the securities of the state for those of the South Sea Company. During the whole of the month of May the stock continued to rise, and on the 28th it was quoted at

five hundred and fifty. In four days after this it took a prodigious leap, rising suddenly from five hundred and fifty to eight hundred and ninety. It was now the general opinion that the stock could rise no higher, and many persons took that opportunity of selling out, with a view of realising their profits. Many noblemen and persons in the train of the King, and about to accompany him to Hanover, were also anxious to sell out. So many sellers, and so few buyers, appeared in the Alley on the 3rd of June, that the stock fell at once from eight hundred and ninety to six hundred and forty. The directors were alarmed, and gave their agents orders to buy. Their efforts succeeded. Towards evening confidence was restored, and the stock advanced to seven hundred and fifty. It continued at this price, with some slight fluctuation, until the company closed their books on the 22nd of June.

It would be needless and uninteresting to detail the various arts employed by the directors to keep up the price of stock. It will be sufficient to state that it finally rose to one thousand per cent. It was quoted at this price in the commencement of August. The bubble was then full-blown, and began to quiver and shake, preparatory to its bursting.

Many of the government annuitants expressed dissatisfaction against the directors. They accused them of partiality in making out the lists for shares

in each subscription. Further uneasiness was occasioned by its being generally known that Sir John Blunt, the chairman, and some others, had sold out. During the whole of the month of August the stock fell, and on the 2nd of September it was quoted at seven hundred only.

The state of things now became alarming. To prevent, if possible, the utter extinction of public confidence in their proceedings, the directors summoned a general court of the whole corporation, to meet in Merchant Tailors' Hall, on the 8th of September. By nine o'clock in the morning, the room was filled to suffocation; Cheapside was blocked up by a crowd unable to gain admittance, and the greatest excitement prevailed. The directors and their friends mustered in great numbers. Sir John Fellowes, the sub-governor, was called to the chair. He acquainted the assembly with the cause of their meeting, read to them the several resolutions of the court of directors, and gave them an account of their proceedings; of the taking in the redeemable and unredeemable funds, and of the subscriptions in money. Mr. Secretary Craggs then made a short speech, wherein he commended the conduct of the directors, and urged that nothing could more effectually contribute to the bringing this scheme to perfection than union among themselves. He concluded with a motion for thanking the court of directors for their prudent and skilful management, and for desiring

them to proceed in such manner as they should think most proper for the interest and advantage of the corporation. Mr. Hungerford, who had rendered himself very conspicuous in the House of Commons for his zeal in behalf of the South Sea Company, and who was shrewdly suspected to have been a considerable gainer by knowing the right time to sell out, was very magniloquent on this occasion. He said that he had seen the rise and fall, the decay and resurrection of many communities of this nature, but that, in his opinion, none had ever performed such wonderful things in so short a time as the South Sea Company. They had done more than the crown, the pulpit, or the bench could do. They had reconciled all parties in one common interest; they had laid asleep, if not wholly extinguished, all the domestic jars and animosities of the nation. By the rise of their stock, monied men had vastly increased their fortunes; country-gentlemen had seen the value of their lands doubled and trebled in their hands. They had at the same time done good to the Church, not a few of the reverend clergy having got great sums by the project. In short, they had enriched the whole nation, and he hoped they had not forgotten themselves. There was some hissing at the latter part of this speech, which for the extravagance of its eulogy was not far removed from satire; but the directors and their friends, and all the winners in the room, applauded vehemently.

The Duke of Portland spoke in a similar strain, and expressed his great wonder why anybody should be dissatisfied: of course, he was a winner by his speculations, and in a condition similar to that of the fat alderman in Joe Miller's Jests, who, whenever he had eaten a good dinner, folded his hands upon his paunch, and expressed his doubts whether there could be a hungry man in the world.

Several resolutions were passed at this meeting, but they had no effect upon the public. Upon the very same evening the stock fell to six hundred and forty, and on the morrow to five hundred and forty. Day after day it continued to fall, until it was as low as four hundred. In a letter dated September 13th, from Mr. Broderick, M. P. to Lord Chancellor Middleton, and published in Coxe's Walpole, the former says,—"Various are the conjectures why the South Sea directors have suffered the cloud to break so early. I made no doubt but they would do so when they found it to their advantage. They have stretched credit so far beyond what it would bear, that specie proves insufficient to support it. Their most considerable men have drawn out, securing themselves by the losses of the deluded, thoughtless numbers, whose understandings have been overruled by avarice and the hope of making mountains out of mole-hills. Thousands of families will be reduced to beggary. The consternation is inexpressible—

the rage beyond description, and the case altogether so desperate that I do not see any plan or scheme so much as thought of for averting the blow, so that I cannot pretend to guess what is next to be done." Ten days afterwards, the stock still falling, he writes,—"The Company have yet come to no determination, for they are in such a wood that they know not which way to turn. By several gentlemen lately come to town, I perceive the very name of a South-Sea-man grows abominable in every country. A great many goldsmiths are already run off, and more will daily. I question whether one-third, nay, one-fourth, of them can stand it. From the very beginning, I founded my judgment of the whole affair upon the unquestionable maxim, that ten millions (which is more than our running cash) could not circulate two hundred millions, beyond which our paper credit extended. That, therefore, whenever that should become doubtful, be the cause what it would, our noble state machine must inevitably fall to the ground."

On the 12th of September, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Secretary Craggs, several conferences were held between the directors of the South Sea and the directors of the Bank. A report which was circulated, that the latter had agreed to circulate six millions of the South Sea Company's bonds, caused the stock to rise to six hundred and seventy; but in the afternoon, as soon

as the report was known to be groundless, the stock fell again to five hundred and eighty; the next day to five hundred and seventy, and so gradually to four hundred.*

The ministry were seriously alarmed at the aspect of affairs. The directors could not appear in the streets without being insulted; dangerous riots were every moment apprehended. Despatches were sent off to the King at Hanover, praying his immediate return. Mr. Walpole, who was staying at his country-seat, was sent for, that he might employ his known influence with the directors of the Bank of England to induce them to accept the proposal made by the South Sea Company for circulating a number of their bonds.

The Bank was very unwilling to mix itself up with the affairs of the Company; it dreaded being involved in calamities which it could not relieve, and received all overtures with visible reluctance. But the universal voice of the nation called upon it to come to the rescue. Every person of note

* Gay (the poet), in that disastrous year, had a present from young Craggs of some South Sea stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share, but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase a hundred a year for life, "which," says Fenton, "will make you sure of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day." This counsel was rejected; the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger.—*Johnson's Lives of the Poets.*

in commercial politics was called in to advise in the emergency. A rough draft of a contract drawn up by Mr. Walpole was ultimately adopted as the basis of further negotiations, and the public alarm abated a little.

On the following day, the 20th of September, a general court of the South Sea Company was held at Merchant Tailors' Hall, in which resolutions were carried, empowering the directors to agree with the Bank of England, or any other persons, to circulate the Company's bonds, or make any other agreement with the Bank which they should think proper. One of the speakers, a Mr. Pulteney, said it was most surprising to see the extraordinary panic which had seized upon the people. Men were running to and fro in alarm and terror, their imaginations filled with some great calamity, the form and dimensions of which nobody knew.

> "Black it stood as night—
> Fierce as ten furies—terrible as hell."

At a general court of the Bank of England held two days afterwards, the governor informed them of the several meetings that had been held on the affairs of the South Sea Company, adding that the directors had not yet thought fit to come to any decision upon the matter. A resolution was then proposed, and carried without a dissentient voice, empowering the directors to agree with those of the South Sea to circulate their bonds, to what

sum, and upon what terms, and for what time, they might think proper.

Thus both parties were at liberty to act as they might judge best for the public interest. Books were opened at the Bank for a subscription of three millions for the support of public credit, on the usual terms of 15*l.* per cent. deposit, 3*l.* per cent. premium, and 5*l.* per cent. interest. So great was the concourse of people in the early part of the morning, all eagerly bringing their money, that it was thought the subscription would be filled that day; but before noon, the tide turned. In spite of all that could be done to prevent it, the South Sea Company's stock fell rapidly. Their bonds were in such discredit, that a run commenced upon the most eminent goldsmiths and bankers, some of whom having lent out great sums upon South Sea stock were obliged to shut up their shops and abscond. The Sword-blade Company, who had hitherto been the chief cashiers of the South Sea Company, stopped payment. This being looked upon as but the beginning of evil, occasioned a great run upon the Bank, who were now obliged to pay out money much faster than they had received it upon the subscription in the morning. The day succeeding was a holiday (the 29th of September), and the Bank had a little breathing time. They bore up against the storm; but their former rivals, the South Sea Company, were wrecked upon it. Their

stock fell to one hundred and fifty, and gradually, after various fluctuations, to one hundred and thirty-five.

The Bank, finding they were not able to restore public confidence, and stem the tide of ruin, without running the risk of being swept away with those they intended to save, declined to carry out the agreement into which they had partially entered. They were under no obligation whatever to continue; for the so called Bank contract was nothing more than the rough draught of an agreement, in which blanks had been left for several important particulars, and which contained no penalty for their secession. "And thus," to use the words of the Parliamentary History, "were seen, in the space of eight months, the rise, progress, and fall of that mighty fabric, which, being wound up by mysterious springs to a wonderful height, had fixed the eyes and expectations of all Europe, but whose foundation, being fraud, illusion, credulity, and infatuation, fell to the ground as soon as the artful management of its directors was discovered."

In the hey-day of its blood, during the progress of this dangerous delusion, the manners of the nation became sensibly corrupted. The Parliamentary inquiry, set on foot to discover the delinquents, disclosed scenes of infamy, disgraceful alike to the morals of the offenders and the intellects of the people among whom they had arisen. It is a deeply interesting study to investigate all the evils

that were the result. Nations, like individuals, cannot become desperate gamblers with impunity. Punishment is sure to overtake them sooner or later. A celebrated writer* is quite wrong, when he says, "that such an era as this is the most unfavourable for a historian; that no reader of sentiment and imagination can be entertained or interested by a detail of transactions such as these, which admit of no warmth, no colouring, no embellishment; a detail of which only serves to exhibit an inanimate picture of tasteless vice and mean degeneracy." On the contrary, and Smollett might have discovered it, if he had been in the humour—the subject is capable of inspiring as much interest as even a novelist can desire. Is there no warmth in the despair of a plundered people?—no life and animation in the picture which might be drawn of the woes of hundreds of impoverished and ruined families? of the wealthy of yesterday become the beggars of to-day? of the powerful and influential changed into exiles and outcasts, and the voice of self-reproach and imprecation resounding from every corner of the land? Is it a dull or uninstructive picture to see a whole people shaking suddenly off the trammels of reason, and running wild after a golden vision, refusing obstinately to believe that it is not real, till, like a deluded hind running after an *ignis fatuus*, they are plunged into a quagmire? But in this false spirit

* Smollett.

has history too often been written. The intrigues of unworthy courtiers to gain the favour of still more unworthy kings; or the records of murderous battles and sieges have been dilated on, and told over and over again, with all the eloquence of style and all the charms of fancy; while the circumstances which have most deeply affected the morals and welfare of the people, have been passed over with but slight notice as dry and dull, and capable of neither warmth nor colouring.

During the progress of this famous bubble, England presented a singular spectacle. The public mind was in a state of unwholesome fermentation. Men were no longer satisfied with the slow but sure profits of cautious industry. The hope of boundless wealth for the morrow made them heedless and extravagant for to-day. A luxury, till then unheard-of, was introduced, bringing in its train a corresponding laxity of morals. The overbearing insolence of ignorant men, who had arisen to sudden wealth by successful gambling, made men of true gentility of mind and manners, blush that gold should have power to raise the unworthy in the scale of society. The haughtiness of some of these "cyphering cits," as they were termed by Sir Richard Steele, was remembered against them in the day of their adversity. In the Parliamentary inquiry, many of the directors suffered more for their insolence than for their peculation. One of them, who, in the full-blown pride of an ignorant

rich man, had said that he would feed his horse upon gold, was reduced almost to bread and water for himself; every haughty look, every overbearing speech, was set down, and repaid them a hundredfold in poverty and humiliation.

The state of matters all over the country was so alarming, that George I. shortened his intended stay in Hanover, and returned in all haste to England. He arrived on the 11th of November, and Parliament was summoned to meet on the 8th of December. In the mean time, public meetings were held in every considerable town of the empire, at which petitions were adopted, praying the vengeance of the Legislature upon the South Sea directors, who, by their fraudulent practices, had brought the nation to the brink of ruin. Nobody seemed to imagine that the nation itself was as culpable as the South Sea Company. Nobody blamed the credulity and avarice of the people,—the degrading lust of gain, which had swallowed up every nobler quality in the national character, or the infatuation which had made the multitude run their heads with such frantic eagerness into the net held out for them by scheming projectors. These things were never mentioned. The people were a simple, honest, hard-working people, ruined by a gang of robbers, who were to be hanged, drawn, and quartered without mercy.

This was the almost unanimous feeling of the country. The two Houses of Parliament were not

more reasonable. Before the guilt of the South Sea directors was known, punishment was the only cry. The King, in his speech from the throne, expressed his hope that they would remember that all their prudence, temper, and resolution were necessary to find out and apply the proper remedy for their misfortunes. In the debate on the answer to the address, several speakers indulged in the most violent invectives against the directors of the South Sea project. The Lord Molesworth was particularly vehement. "It had been said by some, that there was no law to punish the directors of the South Sea Company, who were justly looked upon as the authors of the present misfortunes of the state. In his opinion they ought, upon this occasion, to follow the example of the ancient Romans, who, having no law against parricide, because their legislators supposed no son could be so unnaturally wicked as to embrue his hands in his father's blood, made a law to punish this heinous crime as soon as it was committed. They adjudged the guilty wretch to be sown in a sack, and thrown alive into the Tyber. He looked upon the contrivers and executors of the villanous South Sea scheme as the parricides of their country, and should be satisfied to see them tied in like manner in sacks, and thrown into the Thames." Other members spoke with as much want of temper and discretion. Mr. Walpole was more moderate. He recommended that their first care should be to

restore public credit. "If the city of London were on fire, all wise men would aid in extinguishing the flames, and preventing the spread of the conflagration before they inquired after the incendiaries. Public credit had received a dangerous wound, and lay bleeding, and they ought to apply a speedy remedy to it. It was time enough to punish the assassin afterwards." On the 9th of December an address, in answer to his Majesty's speech, was agreed upon, after an amendment, which was carried without a division, that words should be added expressive of the determination of the House not only to seek a remedy for the national distresses, but to punish the authors of them.

The inquiry proceeded rapidly. The directors were ordered to lay before the House a full account of all their proceedings. Resolutions were passed to the effect that the calamity was mainly owing to the vile arts of stockjobbers, and that nothing could tend more to the re-establishment of public credit than a law to prevent this infamous practice. Mr. Walpole then rose, and said, that "as he had previously hinted, he had spent some time upon a scheme for restoring public credit, but that, the execution of it depending upon a position which had been laid down as fundamental, he thought it proper, before he opened out his scheme, to be informed whether he might rely upon that foundation. It was, whether the subscription of public debts and encumbrances, money subscriptions, and

other contracts, made with the South Sea Company should remain in the present state?" This question occasioned an animated debate. It was finally agreed, by a majority of 259 against 117, that all these contracts should remain in their present state, unless altered for the relief of the proprietors by a general court of the South Sea Company, or set aside by due course of law. On the following day Mr. Walpole laid before a committee of the whole House his scheme for the restoration of public credit, which was, in substance, to ingraft nine millions of South Sea stock into the Bank of England, and the same sum into the East India Company, upon certain conditions. The plan was favourably received by the House. After some few objections, it was ordered that proposals should be received from the two great corporations. They were both unwilling to lend their aid, and the plan met with a warm but fruitless opposition at the general courts summoned for the purpose of deliberating upon it. They, however, ultimately agreed upon the terms on which they would consent to circulate the South Sea bonds, and their report, being presented to the committee, a bill was brought in, under the superintendence of Mr. Walpole, and safely carried through both Houses of Parliament.

A bill was at the same time brought in, for restraining the South Sea directors, governor, sub-governor, treasurer, cashier, and clerks from

leaving the kingdom for a twelvemonth, and for discovering their estates and effects, and preventing them from transporting or alienating the same. All the most influential members of the House supported the bill. Mr. Shippen, seeing Mr. Secretary Craggs in his place, and believing the injurious rumours that were afloat of that minister's conduct in the South Sea business, determined to touch him to the quick. He said, he was glad to see a British House of Commons resuming its pristine vigour and spirit, and acting with so much unanimity for the public good. It was necessary to secure the persons and estates of the South Sea directors and their officers; "but," he added, looking fixedly at Mr. Craggs as he spoke, "there were other men in high station, whom, in time, he would not be afraid to name, who were no less guilty than the directors." Mr. Craggs arose in great wrath, and said, that if the innuendo were directed against him, he was ready to give satisfaction to any man who questioned him, either in the House or out of it. Loud cries of order immediately arose on every side. In the midst of the uproar Lord Molesworth got up, and expressed his wonder at the boldness of Mr. Craggs in challenging the whole House of Commons. He, Lord Molesworth, though somewhat old, past sixty, would answer Mr. Craggs whatever he had to say in the House, and he trusted there were plenty of young men beside him, who would not be afraid

to look Mr. Craggs in the face, out of the House. The cries of order again resounded from every side; the members arose simultaneously; everybody seemed to be vociferating at once. The Speaker in vain called order. The confusion lasted several minutes, during which Lord Molesworth and Mr. Craggs were almost the only members who kept their seats. At last the call for Mr. Craggs became so violent that he thought proper to submit to the universal feeling of the House, and explain his unparliamentary expression. He said, that by giving satisfaction to the impugners of his conduct in that House, he did not mean that he would fight, but that he would explain his conduct. Here the matter ended, and the House proceeded to debate in what manner they should conduct their inquiry into the affairs of the South Sea Company, whether in a grand or a select committee. Ultimately, a Secret Committee of thirteen was appointed, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

The Lords were as zealous and as hasty as the Commons. The Bishop of Rochester said the scheme had been like a pestilence. The Duke of Wharton said the House ought to show no respect of persons; that, for his part, he would give up the dearest friend he had, if he had been engaged in the project. The nation had been plundered in a most shameful and flagrant manner, and he would go as far as anybody in the punishment of the

offenders. Lord Stanhope said, that every farthing possessed by the criminals, whether directors or not directors, ought to be confiscated, to make good the public losses.

During all this time the public excitement was extreme. We learn, from Coxe's Walpole, that the very name of a South Sea director was thought to be synonymous with every species of fraud and villany. Petitions from counties, cities, and boroughs, in all parts of the kingdom, were presented, crying for the justice due to an injured nation and the punishment of the villanous peculators. Those moderate men, who would not go to extreme lengths, even in the punishment of the guilty, were accused of being accomplices, were exposed to repeated insults and virulent invectives, and devoted, both in anonymous letters and public writings, to the speedy vengeance of an injured people. The accusations against Mr. Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Craggs, another member of the ministry, were so loud, that the House of Lords resolved to proceed at once into the investigation concerning them. It was ordered, on the 21st of January, that all brokers concerned in the South Sea scheme should lay before the House an account of the stock or subscriptions bought or sold by them for any of the officers of the Treasury or Exchequer, or in trust for any of them, since Michaelmas 1719. When this account was delivered, it appeared that large quan-

tities of stock had been transferred to the use of Mr. Aislabie. Five of the South Sea directors, including Mr. Edward Gibbon, the grandfather of the celebrated historian, were ordered into the custody of the black rod. Upon a motion made by Earl Stanhope, it was unanimously resolved, that the taking in or giving credit for stock without a valuable consideration actually paid or sufficiently secured; or the purchasing stock by any director or agent of the South Sea Company, for the use or benefit of any member of the administration, or any member of either House of Parliament, during such time as the South Sea Bill was yet pending in Parliament, was a notorious and dangerous corruption. Another resolution was passed a few days afterwards, to the effect that several of the directors and officers of the Company having, in a clandestine manner, sold their own stock to the Company, had been guilty of a notorious fraud and breach of trust, and had thereby mainly caused the unhappy turn of affairs that had so much affected public credit. Mr. Aislabie resigned his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and absented himself from Parliament until the formal inquiry into his individual guilt was brought under the consideration of the Legislature.

In the mean time, Knight, the treasurer of the Company, and who was intrusted with all the dangerous secrets of the dishonest directors, packed up his books and documents, and made his escape

from the country. He embarked in disguise, in a small boat on the river, and proceeding to a vessel hired for the purpose, was safely conveyed to Calais. The Committee of Secrecy informed the House of the circumstance, when it was resolved unanimously that two addresses should be presented to the King; the first praying that he would issue a proclamation, offering a reward for the apprehension of Knight; and the second, that he would give immediate orders to stop the ports, and to take effectual care of the coasts, to prevent the said Knight, or any other officers of the South Sea Company, from escaping out of the kingdom. The ink was hardly dry upon these addresses before they were carried to the King by Mr. Methuen, deputed by the House for that purpose. The same evening a royal proclamation was issued, offering a reward of two thousand pounds for the apprehension of Knight. The Commons ordered the doors of the House to be locked, and the keys to be placed upon the table. General Ross, one of the members of the Committee of Secrecy, acquainted them that they had already discovered a train of the deepest villany and fraud that Hell had ever contrived to ruin a nation, which in due time they would lay before the House. In the mean time, in order to a further discovery, the Committee thought it highly necessary to secure the persons of some of the directors and principal South Sea officers, and to seize their papers.

A motion to this effect having been made, was carried unanimously. Sir Robert Chaplin, Sir Theodore Janssen, Mr. Sawbridge, and Mr. F. Eyles, members of the House, and directors of the South Sea Company, were summoned to appear in their places, and answer for their corrupt practices. Sir Theodore Janssen and Mr. Sawbridge answered to their names, and endeavoured to exculpate themselves. The House heard them patiently, and then ordered them to withdraw. A motion was then made, and carried *nemine contradicente,* that they had been guilty of a notorious breach of trust—had occasioned much loss to great numbers of his Majesty's subjects, and had highly prejudiced the public credit. It was then ordered that, for their offence, they should be expelled the House, and taken into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. Sir Robert Chaplin and Mr. Eyles, attending in their places four days afterwards, were also expelled the House. It was resolved at the same time to address the King, to give directions to his ministers at foreign courts to make application for Knight, that he might be delivered up to the English authorities, in case he took refuge in any of their dominions. The King at once agreed, and messengers were despatched to all parts of the Continent the same night.

Among the directors taken into custody, was Sir John Blunt, the man whom popular opinion has generally accused of having been the original au-

thor and father of the scheme. This man, we are informed by Pope, in his epistle to Allen, Lord Bathurst, was a dissenter, of a most religious deportment, and professed to be a great believer. He constantly declaimed against the luxury and corruption of the age, the partiality of parliaments, and the misery of party spirit. He was particularly eloquent against avarice in great and noble persons. He was originally a scrivener, and afterwards became, not only a director, but the most active manager of the South Sea Company. Whether it was during his career in this capacity that he first began to declaim against the avarice of the great, we are not informed. He certainly must have seen enough of it to justify his severest anathema; but if the preacher had himself been free from the vice he condemned, his declamations would have had a better effect. He was brought up in custody to the bar of the House of Lords, and underwent a long examination. He refused to answer several important questions. He said he had been examined already by a committee of the House of Commons, and as he did not remember his answers, and might contradict himself, he refused to answer before another tribunal. This declaration, in itself an indirect proof of guilt, occasioned some commotion in the House. He was again asked peremptorily whether he had ever sold any portion of the stock to any member of the administration, or any member of either House of

Parliament, to facilitate the passing of the bill. He again declined to answer. He was anxious, he said, to treat the House with all possible respect, but he thought it hard to be compelled to accuse himself. After several ineffectual attempts to refresh his memory, he was directed to withdraw. A violent discussion ensued between the friends and opponents of the ministry. It was asserted that the administration were no strangers to the convenient taciturnity of Sir John Blunt. The Duke of Wharton made a reflection upon the Earl Stanhope, which the latter warmly resented. He spoke under great excitement, and with such vehemence as to cause a sudden determination of blood to the head. He felt himself so ill that he was obliged to leave the House and retire to his chamber. He was cupped immediately, and also let blood on the following morning, but with slight relief. The fatal result was not anticipated. Towards evening he became drowsy, and turning himself on his face, expired. The sudden death of this statesman caused great grief to the nation. George I. was exceedingly affected, and shut himself up for some hours in his closet, inconsolable for his loss.

Knight, the treasurer of the company, was apprehended at Tirlemont, near Liege, by one of the secretaries of Mr. Leathes, the British resident at Brussels, and lodged in the citadel of Antwerp. Repeated applications were made to the court of

Austria to deliver him up, but in vain. Knight threw himself upon the protection of the states of Brabant, and demanded to be tried in that country. It was a privilege granted to the states of Brabant by one of the articles of the *Joyeuse Entrée,* that every criminal apprehended in that country should be tried in that country. The states insisted on their privilege, and refused to deliver Knight to the British authorities. The latter did not cease their solicitations; but in the mean time, Knight escaped from the citadel.

On the 16th of February the Committee of Secrecy made their first report to the House. They stated that their inquiry had been attended with numerous difficulties and embarrassments; every one they had examined had endeavoured, as far as in him lay, to defeat the ends of justice. In some of the books produced before them, false and fictitious entries had been made; in others, there were entries of money, with blanks for the name of the stockholders. There were frequent erasures and alterations, and in some of the books leaves were torn out. They also found that some books of great importance had been destroyed altogether, and that some had been taken away or secreted. At the very entrance into their inquiry, they had observed that the matters referred to them were of great variety and extent. Many persons had been intrusted with various parts in the execution of the law, and under colour thereof had acted

in an unwarrantable manner, in disposing of the properties of many thousands of persons, amounting to many millions of money. They discovered that, before the South Sea Act was passed, there was an entry in the Company's books of the sum of 1,259,325*l*, upon account of stock stated to have been sold to the amount of 574,500*l*. This stock was all fictitious, and had been disposed of with a view to promote the passing of the bill. It was noted as sold at various days, and at various prices, from 150 to 325 per cent. Being surprised to see so large an account disposed of, at a time when the Company were not empowered to increase their capital, the committee determined to investigate most carefully the whole transaction. The governor, sub-governor, and several directors were brought before them, and examined rigidly. They found that, at the time these entries were made, the Company was not in possession of such a quantity of stock, having in their own right only a small quantity, not exceeding thirty thousand pounds at the utmost. Pursuing the inquiry, they found that this amount of stock, was to be esteemed as taken in or holden by the Company, for the benefit of the pretended purchasers, although no mutual agreement was made for its delivery or acceptance at any certain time. No money was paid down, nor any deposit or security whatever given to the Company by the supposed purchasers; so that if the stock had fallen, as might have been expected,

had the act not passed, they would have sustained no loss. If, on the contrary, the price of stock advanced (as it actually did by the success of the scheme), the difference by the advanced price was to be made good to them. Accordingly, after the passing of the act, the account of stock was made up and adjusted with Mr. Knight, and the pretended purchasers were paid the difference out of the Company's cash. This fictitious stock, which had been chiefly at the disposal of Sir John Blunt, Mr. Gibbon, and Mr. Knight, was distributed among several members of the government and their connexions, by way of bribe, to facilitate the passing of the bill. To the Earl of Sunderland was assigned 50,000*l.* of this stock; to the Duchess of Kendal 10,000*l*; to the Countess of Platen 10,000*l*; to her two nieces 10,000*l*; to Mr. Secretary Craggs 30,000*l*; to Mr. Charles Stanhope (one of the Secretaries of the Treasury) 10,000*l*; to the Sword-blade Company 50,000*l.* It also appeared that Mr. Stanhope had received the enormous sum of 250,000*l.* as the difference in the price of some stock, through the hands of Turner, Caswall, and Co., but that his name had been partly erased from their books, and altered to Stangape. Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had made profits still more abominable. He had an account with the same firm, who were also South Sea directors, to the amount of 794,451*l.* He had, besides, advised the Company to make their second

subscription one million and a half, instead of a million, by their own authority, and without any warrant. The third subscription had been conducted in a manner as disgraceful. Mr. Aislabie's name was down for 70,000*l*; Mr. Craggs, senior, for 659,000*l*; the Earl of Sunderland's for 160,000*l*; and Mr. Stanhope for 47,000*l*. This report was succeeded by six others, less important. At the end of the last, the committee declared that the absence of Knight, who had been principally intrusted, prevented them from carrying on their inquiries.

The first report was ordered to be printed, and taken into consideration on the next day but one succeeding. After a very angry and animated debate, a series of resolutions were agreed to, condemnatory of the conduct of the directors, of the members of the Parliament and of the administration concerned with them; and declaring that they ought, each and all, to make satisfaction out of their own estates for the injury they had done the public. Their practices were declared to be corrupt, infamous, and dangerous; and a bill was ordered to be brought in for the relief of the unhappy sufferers.

Mr. Charles Stanhope was the first person brought to account for his share in these transactions. He urged in his defence that, for some years past, he had lodged all the money he was possessed of in Mr. Knight's hands, and whatever stock Mr.

Knight had taken in for him, he had paid a valuable consideration for it. As to the stock that had been bought for him by Turner, Caswall, and Co. he knew nothing about it. Whatever had been done in that matter was done without his authority, and he could not be responsible for it. Turner and Co. took the latter charge upon themselves, but it was notorious to every unbiassed and unprejudiced person that Mr. Stanhope was a gainer of the 250,000*l.* which lay in the hands of that firm to his credit. He was, however, acquitted by a majority of three only. The greatest exertions were made to screen him. Lord Stanhope, the son of the Earl of Chesterfield, went round to the wavering members, using all the eloquence he was possessed of to induce them either to vote for the acquittal or to absent themselves from the house. Many weak-headed country-gentlemen were led astray by his persuasions, and the result was as already stated. The acquittal caused the greatest discontent throughout the country. Mobs of a menacing character assembled in different parts of London; fears of riots were generally entertained, especially as the examination of a still greater delinquent was expected by many to have a similar termination. Mr. Aislabie, whose high office and deep responsibilities should have kept him honest, even had native principle been insufficient, was very justly regarded as perhaps the greatest criminal of all. His case was entered into

on the day succeeding the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope. Great excitement prevailed, and the lobbies and avenues of the house were beset by crowds, impatient to know the result. The debate lasted the whole day. Mr. Aislabie found few friends: his guilt was so apparent and so heinous that nobody had courage to stand up in his favour. It was finally resolved, without a dissentient voice, that Mr. Aislabie had encouraged and promoted the destructive execution of the South Sea scheme with a view to his own exorbitant profit, and had combined with the directors in their pernicious practices to the ruin of the public trade and credit of the kingdom: that he should for his offences be ignominiously expelled from the House of Commons, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower of London; that he should be restrained from going out of the kingdom for a whole year, or till the end of the next session of Parliament; and that he should make out a correct account of all his estate, in order that it might be applied to the relief of those who had suffered by his malpractices.

This verdict caused the greatest joy. Though it was delivered at half-past twelve at night, it soon spread over the city. Several persons illuminated their houses in token of their joy. On the following day, when Mr. Aislabie was conveyed to the Tower, the mob assembled on Tower-hill with the intention of hooting and pelting him.

Not succeeding in this, they kindled a large bonfire, and danced around it in the exuberance of their delight. Several bonfires were made in other places; London presented the appearance of a holiday, and people congratulated one another as if they had just escaped from some great calamity. The rage upon the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope had grown to such a height that none could tell where it would have ended, had Mr. Aislabie met with the like indulgence.

To increase the public satisfaction, Sir George Caswall, of the firm of Turner, Caswall, & Co. was expelled the House on the following day, and ordered to refund the sum of 250,000*l.*

That part of the report of the Committee of Secrecy which related to the Earl of Sunderland was next taken into consideration. Every effort was made to clear his Lordship from the imputation. As the case against him rested chiefly on the evidence extorted from Sir John Blunt, great pains were taken to make it appear that Sir John's word was not to be believed, especially in a matter affecting the honour of a peer and privy councillor. All the friends of the ministry rallied around the Earl, it being generally reported that a verdict of guilty against him would bring a Tory ministry into power. He was eventually acquitted, by a majority of 233 against 172; but the country was convinced of his guilt. The greatest indignation was everywhere expressed, and menacing mobs

again assembled in London. Happily no disturbances took place.

This was the day on which Mr. Craggs, the elder, expired. The morrow had been appointed for the consideration of his case. It was very generally believed that he had poisoned himself. It appeared, however, that grief for the loss of his son, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, who had died five weeks previously of the small-pox, preyed much on his mind. For this son, dearly beloved, he had been amassing vast heaps of riches: he had been getting money, but not honestly; and he for whose sake he had bartered his honour and sullied his fame, was now no more. The dread of further exposure increased his trouble of mind, and ultimately brought on an apoplectic fit, in which he expired. He left a fortune of a million and a half, which was afterwards confiscated for the benefit of the sufferers by the unhappy delusion he had been so mainly instrumental in raising.

One by one the case of every director of the Company was taken into consideration. A sum amounting to two millions and fourteen thousand pounds was confiscated from their estates towards repairing the mischief they had done, each man being allowed a certain residue, in proportion to his conduct and circumstances, with which he might begin the world anew. Sir John Blunt was only allowed 5,000*l.* out of his fortune of upwards of 183,000*l.*; Sir John Fellows was allowed 10,000*l.*

out of 243,000*l.*; Sir Theodore Janssen, 50,000*l.* out of 243,000*l.*; Mr. Edward Gibbon, 10,000*l.* out of 106,000*l.*; Sir John Lambert, 5000*l.* out of 72,000*l.* Others, less deeply involved, were treated with greater liberality. Gibbon, the historian, whose grandfather was the Mr. Edward Gibbon so severely mulcted, has given, in the Memoirs of his Life and Writings, an interesting account of the proceedings in Parliament at this time. He owns that he is not an unprejudiced witness; but, as all the writers from which it is possible to extract any notice of the proceedings of these disastrous years, were prejudiced on the other side, the statements of the great historian become of additional value. If only on the principle of *audi alteram partem,* his opinion is entitled to consideration. "In the year 1716," he says, "my grandfather was elected one of the directors of the South Sea Company, and his books exhibited the proof that before his acceptance of that fatal office, he had acquired an independent fortune of 60,000*l.* But his fortune was overwhelmed in the shipwreck of the year twenty, and the labours of thirty years were blasted in a single day. Of the use or abuse of the South Sea scheme, of the guilt or innocence of my grandfather and his brother directors, I am neither a competent nor a disinterested judge. Yet the equity of modern times must condemn the violent and arbitrary proceedings, which would have disgraced the cause of justice, and rendered in-

justice still more odious. No sooner had the nation awakened from its golden dream, than a popular, and even a Parliamentary clamour, demanded its victims; but it was acknowledged on all sides, that the directors, however guilty, could not be touched by any known laws of the land. The intemperate notions of Lord Molesworth were not literally acted on; but a bill of pains and penalties was introduced—a retro-active statute, to punish the offences which did not exist at the time they were committed. The Legislature restrained the persons of the directors, imposed an exorbitant security for their appearance, and marked their character with a previous note of ignominy. They were compelled to deliver, upon oath, the strict value of their estates, and were disabled from making any transfer or alienation of any part of their property. Against a bill of pains and penalties, it is the common right of every subject to be heard by his counsel at the bar. They prayed to be heard. Their prayer was refused, and their oppressors, who required no evidence, would listen to no defence. It had been at first proposed, that one-eighth of their respective estates should be allowed for the future support of the directors; but it was speciously urged, that in the various shades of opulence and guilt, such a proportion would be too light for many, and for some might possibly be too heavy. The character and conduct of each man were separately weighed; but, instead of the

calm solemnity of a judicial inquiry, the fortune and honour of thirty-three Englishmen were made the topics of hasty conversation, the sport of a lawless majority; and the basest member of the committee, by a malicious word, or a silent vote, might indulge his general spleen or personal animosity. Injury was aggravated by insult, and insult was embittered by pleasantry. Allowances of 20*l.* or 1*s.* were facetiously moved. A vague report that a director had formerly been concerned in another project, by which some unknown persons had lost their money, was admitted as a proof of his actual guilt. One man was ruined because he had dropped a foolish speech, that his horses should feed upon gold; another, because he was grown so proud, that one day, at the Treasury, he had refused a civil answer to persons much above him. All were condemned, absent and unheard, in arbitrary fines and forfeitures, which swept away the greatest part of their substance. Such bold oppression can scarcely be shielded by the omnipotence of Parliament. My grandfather could not expect to be treated with more lenity than his companions. His Tory principles and connexions rendered him obnoxious to the ruling powers. His name was reported in a suspicious secret. His well-known abilities could not plead the excuse of ignorance or error. In the first proceedings against the South Sea directors, Mr. Gibbon was one of the first taken into custody, and in the final sentence the measure of his fine

proclaimed him eminently guilty. The total estimate, which he delivered on oath to the House of Commons, amounted to 106,543*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*, exclusive of antecedent settlements. Two different allowances of 15,000*l.* and of 10,000*l.* were moved for Mr. Gibbon; but, on the question being put, it was carried without a division for the smaller sum. On these ruins, with the skill and credit of which Parliament had not been able to despoil him, my grandfather, at a mature age, erected the edifice of a new fortune. The labours of sixteen years were amply rewarded; and I have reason to believe that the second structure was not much inferior to the first."

The next consideration of the Legislature, after the punishment of the directors, was to restore public credit. The scheme of Walpole had been found insufficient, and had fallen into disrepute. A computation was made of the whole capital stock of the South Sea Company at the end of the year 1720. It was found to amount to thirty-seven millions eight hundred thousand pounds, of which the stock allotted to all the proprietors only amounted to twenty-four millions five hundred thousand pounds. The remainder of thirteen millions three hundred thousand pounds belonged to the Company in their corporate capacity, and was the profit they had made by the national delusion. Upwards of eight millions of this were taken from the Company, and divided among the proprietors and subscribers ge-

nerally, making a dividend of about 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent. This was a great relief. It was further ordered, that such persons as had borrowed money from the South Sea Company upon stock actually transferred and pledged at the time of borrowing to or for the use of the Company, should be free from all demands, upon payment of ten per cent. of the sums so borrowed. They had lent about eleven millions in this manner, at a time when prices were unnaturally raised; and they now received back one million one hundred thousand, when prices had sunk to their ordinary level.

But it was a long time before public credit was thoroughly restored. Enterprise, like Icarus, had soared too high, and melted the wax of her wings; like Icarus, she had fallen into a sea, and learned, while floundering in its waves, that her proper element was the solid ground. She has never since attempted so high a flight.

In times of great commercial prosperity there has been a tendency to over-speculation on several occasions since then. The success of one project generally produces others of a similar kind. Popular imitativeness will always, in a trading nation, seize hold of such successes, and drag a community too anxious for profits into an abyss from which extrication is difficult. Bubble companies, of a kind similar to those engendered by the South Sea project, lived their little day in the famous year of the panic, 1825. On that occasion, as in 1720,

knavery gathered a rich harvest from cupidity, but both suffered when the day of reckoning came. The schemes of the year 1836 threatened, at one time, results as disastrous; but they were happily averted before it was too late. The South Sea project thus remains, and, it is to be hoped, always will remain, the greatest example in British history, of the infatuation of the people for commercial gambling. From the bitter experience of that period, posterity may learn how dangerous it is to let speculation riot unrestrained, and to hope for enormous profits from inadequate causes. Degrading as were the circumstances, there is wisdom to be gained from the lesson which they teach.

THE TULIPOMANIA.

Quis furor ô cives !—Lucan.

The tulip,—so named, it is said, from a Turkish word, signifying a turban,—was introduced into western Europe about the middle of the sixteenth century. Conrad Gesner, who claims the merit of having brought it into repute,—little dreaming of the extraordinary commotion it was to make in the world,—says that he first saw it in the year 1559, in a garden at Augsburg, belonging to the learned Counsellor Herwart, a man very famous in his day for his collection of rare exotics. The bulbs were sent to this gentleman by a friend at Constantinople, where the flower had long been a favourite. In the course of ten or eleven years after this period, tulips were much sought after by the wealthy, especially in Holland and Germany. Rich people at Amsterdam sent for the bulbs direct to Constantinople, and paid the most extravagant prices for them. The first roots planted in England were brought from Vienna in 1600. Until the year 1634 the tulip annually increased in re-

putation, until it was deemed a proof of bad taste in any man of fortune to be without a collection of them. Many learned men, including Pompeius de Angelis and the celebrated Lipsius of Leyden, the author of the treatise "De Constantia," were passionately fond of tulips. The rage for possessing them soon caught the middle classes of society, and merchants and shopkeepers, even of moderate means, began to vie with each other in the rarity of these flowers and the preposterous prices they paid for them. A trader at Harlaem was known to pay one-half of his fortune for a single root—not with the design of selling it again at a profit, but to keep in his own conservatory for the admiration of his acquaintance.

One would suppose that there must have been some great virtue in this flower to have made it so valuable in the eyes of so prudent a people as the Dutch; but it has neither the beauty nor the perfume of the rose—hardly the beauty of the "sweet, sweet-pea;" neither is it as enduring as either. Cowley, it is true, is loud in its praise. He says—

> "The tulip next appeared, all over gay,
> But wanton, full of pride, and full of play;
> The world can't show a dye but here has place;
> Nay, by new mixtures, she can change her face;
> Purple and gold are both beneath her care—
> The richest needlework she loves to wear;
> Her only study is to please the eye,
> And to outshine the rest in finery."

This, though not very poetical, is the description of a poet. Beckmann, in his History of Inventions, paints it with more fidelity, and in prose more pleasing than Cowley's poetry. He says, "There are few plants which acquire, through accident, weakness, or disease, so many variegations as the tulip. When uncultivated, and in its natural state, it is almost of one colour, has large leaves, and an extraordinarily long stem. When it has been weakened by cultivation, it becomes more agreeable in the eyes of the florist. The petals are then paler, smaller, and more diversified in hue; and the leaves acquire a softer green colour. Thus this masterpiece of culture, the more beautiful it turns, grows so much the weaker, so that, with the greatest skill and most careful attention, it can scarcely be transplanted, or even kept alive."

Many persons grow insensibly attached to that which gives them a great deal of trouble, as a mother often loves her sick and ever-ailing child better than her more healthy offspring. Upon the same principle we must account for the unmerited encomia lavished upon these fragile blossoms. In 1634, the rage among the Dutch to possess them was so great that the ordinary industry of the country was neglected, and the population, even to its lowest dregs, embarked in the tulip trade. As the mania increased, prices augmented, until, in the year 1635, many persons were known to

invest a fortune of 100,000 florins in the purchase of forty roots. It then became necessary to sell them by their weight in *perits*, a small weight less than a grain. A tulip of the species called *Admiral Liefken*, weighing 400 *perits*, was worth 4400 florins; an *Admiral Von der Eyk*, weighing 446 *perits*, was worth 1260 florins; a *shilder* of 106 *perits* was worth 1615 florins; a *viceroy* of 400 *perits*, 3000 florins, and, most precious of all, a *Semper Augustus*, weighing 200 *perits*, was thought to be very cheap at 5500 florins. The latter was much sought after, and even an inferior bulb might command a price of 2000 florins. It is related that, at one time, early in 1636, there were only two roots of this description to be had in all Holland, and those not of the best. One was in the possession of a dealer in Amsterdam, and the other in Harlaem. So anxious were the speculators to obtain them that one person offered the fee-simple of twelve acres of building ground for the Harlaem tulip. That of Amsterdam was bought for 4600 florins, a new carriage, two grey horses, and a complete suit of harness. Munting, an industrious author of that day, who wrote a folio volume of one thousand pages upon the tulipomania, has preserved the following list of the various articles, and their value, which were delivered for one single root of the rare species called the *viceroy*:—

	florins.
Two lasts of wheat	448
Four lasts of rye	558
Four fat oxen	480
Eight fat swine	240
Twelve fat sheep	120
Two hogsheads of wine	70
Four tuns of beer	32
Two tons of butter	192
One thousand lbs. of cheese	120
A complete bed	100
A suit of clothes	80
A silver drinking cup	60
	2500

People who had been absent from Holland, and whose chance it was to return when this folly was at its maximum, were sometimes led into awkward dilemmas by their ignorance. There is an amusing instance of the kind related in Blainville's Travels. A wealthy merchant, who prided himself not a little on his rare tulips, received upon one occasion a very valuable consignment of merchandise from the Levant. Intelligence of its arrival was brought him by a sailor, who presented himself for that purpose at the counting-house, among bales of goods of every description. The merchant, to reward him for his news, munificently made him a present of a fine red herring for his breakfast. The sailor had, it appears, a great partiality for onions, and seeing a bulb very like an onion lying upon the counter of this liberal trader, and thinking it, no doubt, very much out

of its place among silks and velvets, he slily seized an opportunity and slipped it into his pocket, as a relish for his herring. He got clear off with his prize, and proceeded to the quay to eat his breakfast. Hardly was his back turned when the merchant missed his valuable *Semper Augustus*, worth three thousand florins, or about 280*l.* sterling. The whole establishment was instantly in an uproar; search was everywhere made for the precious root, but it was not to be found. Great was the merchant's distress of mind. The search was renewed, but again without success. At last some one thought of the sailor.

The unhappy merchant sprang into the street at the bare suggestion. His alarmed household followed him. The sailor, simple soul! had not thought of concealment. He was found quietly sitting on a coil of ropes, masticating the last morsel of his "*onion*." Little did he dream that he had been eating a breakfast whose cost might have regaled a whole ship's crew for a twelvemonth; or, as the plundered merchant himself expressed it, "might have sumptuously feasted the Prince of Orange and the whole court of the Stadtholder." Anthony caused pearls to be dissolved in wine to drink the health of Cleopatra; Sir Richard Whittington was as foolishly magnificent in an entertainment to King Henry V; and Sir Thomas Gresham drank a diamond, dissolved in wine, to the health of Queen Elizabeth, when she opened the

Royal Exchange: but the breakfast of this roguish Dutchman was as splendid as either. He had an advantage, too, over his wasteful predecessors: *their* gems did not improve the taste or the wholesomeness of *their* wine, while *his* tulip was quite delicious with his red herring. The most unfortunate part of the business for him was, that he remained in prison for some months, on a charge of felony, preferred against him by the merchant.

Another story is told of an English traveller, which is scarcely less ludicrous. This gentleman, an amateur botanist, happened to see a tulip-root lying in the conservatory of a wealthy Dutchman. Being ignorant of its quality, he took out his penknife, and peeled off its coats, with the view of making experiments upon it. When it was by this means reduced to half its original size, he cut it into two equal sections, making all the time many learned remarks on the singular appearances of the unknown bulb. Suddenly the owner pounced upon him, and, with fury in his eyes, asked him if he knew what he had been doing? "Peeling a most extraordinary onion," replied the philosopher. "*Hundert tausend duyvel*," said the Dutchman; "it's an Admiral *Van der Eyck*." "Thank you," replied the traveller, taking out his note-book to make a memorandum of the same; "are these admirals common in your country?" "Death and the devil," said the Dutchman, seizing the astonished man of science by the collar; "come before the

syndic, and you shall see." In spite of his remonstrances, the traveller was led through the streets, followed by a mob of persons. When brought into the presence of the magistrate, he learned, to his consternation, that the root upon which he had been experimentalizing was worth four thousand florins; and, notwithstanding all he could urge in extenuation, he was lodged in prison until he found securities for the payment of this sum.

The demand for tulips of a rare species increased so much in the year 1636, that regular marts for their sale were established on the Stock Exchange of Amsterdam, in Rotterdam, Harlaem, Leyden, Alkmar, Hoorn, and other towns. Symptoms of gambling now became, for the first time, apparent. The stockjobbers, ever on the alert for a new speculation, dealt largely in tulips, making use of all the means they so well knew how to employ, to cause fluctuations in prices. At first, as in all these gambling mania, confidence was at its height, and everybody gained. The tulip-jobbers speculated in the rise and fall of the tulip stocks, and made large profits by buying when prices fell, and selling out when they rose. Many individuals grew suddenly rich. A golden bait hung temptingly out before the people, and, one after the other, they rushed to the tulip marts, like flies around a honey-pot. Every one imagined that the passion for tulips would last for ever, and that the wealthy from every part of the world would send to Hol-

land, and pay whatever prices were asked for them. The riches of Europe would be concentrated on the shores of the Zuyder Zee, and poverty banished from the favoured clime of Holland. Nobles, citizens, farmers, mechanics, seamen, footmen, maid-servants, even chimney-sweeps and old clothes-women, dabbled in tulips. People of all grades converted their property into cash, and invested it in flowers. Houses and lands were offered for sale at ruinously low prices, or assigned in payment of bargains made at the tulip-mart. Foreigners became smitten with the same frenzy, and money poured into Holland from all directions. The prices of the necessaries of life rose again by degrees; houses and lands, horses and carriages, and luxuries of every sort, rose in value with them, and for some months Holland seemed the very antechamber of Plutus. The operations of the trade became so extensive and so intricate, that it was found necessary to draw up a code of laws for the guidance of the dealers. Notaries and clerks were also appointed, who devoted themselves exclusively to the interests of the trade. The designation of public notary was hardly known in some towns, that of tulip notary usurping its place. In the smaller towns, where there was no exchange, the principal tavern was usually selected as the "show-place," where high and low traded in tulips, and confirmed their bargains over sumptuous entertainments. These dinners were sometimes attended by

two or three hundred persons, and large vases of tulips, in full bloom, were placed at regular intervals upon the tables and sideboards, for their gratification during the repast.

At last, however, the more prudent began to see that this folly could not last for ever. Rich people no longer bought the flowers to keep them in their gardens, but to sell them again at cent. per cent. profit. It was seen that somebody must lose fearfully in the end. As this conviction spread, prices fell, and never rose again. Confidence was destroyed, and a universal panic seized upon the dealers. *A* had agreed to purchase ten *Sempers Augustines* from *B*, at four thousand florins each, at six weeks after the signing of the contract. *B* was ready with the flowers at the appointed time; but the price had fallen to three or four hundred florins, and *A* refused either to pay the difference or receive the tulips. Defaulters were announced day after day in all the towns of Holland. Hundreds who, a few months previously, had begun to doubt that there was such a thing as poverty in the land, suddenly found themselves the possessors of a few bulbs, which nobody would buy, even though they offered them at one quarter of the sums they had paid for them. The cry of distress resounded everywhere, and each man accused his neighbour. The few who had contrived to enrich themselves hid their wealth from the knowledge of their fellow-citizens, and invested it in the English or other

funds. Many who, for a brief season, had emerged from the humbler walks of life, were cast back into their original obscurity. Substantial merchants were reduced almost to beggary, and many a representative of a noble line saw the fortunes of his house ruined beyond redemption.

When the first alarm subsided, the tulip-holders in the several towns held public meetings to devise what measures were best to be taken to restore public credit. It was generally agreed, that deputies should be sent from all parts to Amsterdam, to consult with the government upon some remedy for the evil. The Government at first refused to interfere, but advised the tulip-holders to agree to some plan among themselves. Several meetings were held for this purpose; but no measure could be devised likely to give satisfaction to the deluded people, or repair even a slight portion of the mischief that had been done. The language of complaint and reproach was in everybody's mouth, and all the meetings were of the most stormy character. At last, however, after much bickering and ill-will, it was agreed, at Amsterdam, by the assembled deputies, that all contracts made in the height of the mania, or prior to the month of November 1636, should be declared null and void, and that, in those made after that date, purchasers should be freed from their engagements, on paying ten per cent. to the vendor. This decision gave no satisfaction. The vendors who had their tulips on hand were, of

on the day succeeding the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope. Great excitement prevailed, and the lobbies and avenues of the house were beset by crowds, impatient to know the result. The debate lasted the whole day. Mr. Aislabie found few friends: his guilt was so apparent and so heinous that nobody had courage to stand up in his favour. It was finally resolved, without a dissentient voice, that Mr. Aislabie had encouraged and promoted the destructive execution of the South Sea scheme with a view to his own exorbitant profit, and had combined with the directors in their pernicious practices to the ruin of the public trade and credit of the kingdom: that he should for his offences be ignominiously expelled from the House of Commons, and committed a close prisoner to the Tower of London; that he should be restrained from going out of the kingdom for a whole year, or till the end of the next session of Parliament; and that he should make out a correct account of all his estate, in order that it might be applied to the relief of those who had suffered by his malpractices.

This verdict caused the greatest joy. Though it was delivered at half-past twelve at night, it soon spread over the city. Several persons illuminated their houses in token of their joy. On the following day, when Mr. Aislabie was conveyed to the Tower, the mob assembled on Tower-hill with the intention of hooting and pelting him.

Not succeeding in this, they kindled a large bonfire, and danced around it in the exuberance of their delight. Several bonfires were made in other places; London presented the appearance of a holiday, and people congratulated one another as if they had just escaped from some great calamity. The rage upon the acquittal of Mr. Stanhope had grown to such a height that none could tell where it would have ended, had Mr. Aislabie met with the like indulgence.

To increase the public satisfaction, Sir George Caswall, of the firm of Turner, Caswall, & Co. was expelled the House on the following day, and ordered to refund the sum of 250,000*l.*

That part of the report of the Committee of Secrecy which related to the Earl of Sunderland was next taken into consideration. Every effort was made to clear his Lordship from the imputation. As the case against him rested chiefly on the evidence extorted from Sir John Blunt, great pains were taken to make it appear that Sir John's word was not to be believed, especially in a matter affecting the honour of a peer and privy councillor. All the friends of the ministry rallied around the Earl, it being generally reported that a verdict of guilty against him would bring a Tory ministry into power. He was eventually acquitted, by a majority of 233 against 172; but the country was convinced of his guilt. The greatest indignation was everywhere expressed, and menacing mobs

In England, in our day, strange as it may appear, a tulip will produce more money than an oak. If one could be found, *rara in terris*, and black as the black swan alluded to by Juvenal, its price would equal that of a dozen acres of standing corn. In Scotland, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the highest price for tulips, according to the authority of a writer in the supplement to the third edition of the "Encyclopedia Britannica," was ten guineas. Their value appears to have diminished from that time till the year 1769, when the two most valuable species in England were the *Don Quevedo* and the *Valentinier*, the former of which was worth two guineas and the latter two guineas and a half. These prices appear to have been the minimum. In the year 1800, a common price was fifteen guineas for a single bulb. In 1835, so foolish were the fanciers, that a bulb of the species called the Miss Fanny Kemble was sold by public auction in London for seventy-five pounds. Still more astonishing was the price of a tulip in the possession of a gardener in the King's Road, Chelsea. In his catalogues, it was labelled at two hundred guineas! Thus a flower, which for beauty and perfume was surpassed by the abundant roses of the garden,—a nosegay of which might be purchased for a penny,—was priced at a sum which would have provided an industrious labourer and his family with food, and clothes, and lodging for six years! Should chickweed

and groundsel ever come into fashion, the wealthy would, no doubt, vie with each other in adorning their gardens with them, and paying the most extravagant prices for them. In so doing, they would hardly be more foolish than the admirers of tulips. The common prices for these flowers at the present time vary from five to fifteen guineas, according to the rarity of the species.

RELICS.

A fouth o' auld knick-knackets,
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three, in tackets,
A towmond guid;
An' parritch pats, and auld saut backets,
Afore the flood.

BURNS.

THE love for relics is one which will never be eradicated as long as feeling and affection are denizens of the heart. It is a love which is most easily excited in the best and kindliest natures, and which few are callous enough to scoff at. Who would not treasure the lock of hair that once adorned the brow of the faithful wife, now cold in death, or that hung down the neck of a beloved infant, now sleeping under the sward? Not one. They are home-relics, whose sacred worth is intelligible to all;—spoils rescued from the devouring grave, which, to the affectionate, are beyond all price. How dear to a forlorn survivor the book over whose pages he has pored with one departed! How much greater its value, if that hand, now cold, had written a thought, an opinion, or a name, upon the leaf! Besides these sweet, domestic relics, there are

others, which no one can condemn; relics sanctified by that admiration of greatness and goodness which is akin to love; such as the copy of Montaigne's Florio, with the name of Shakspeare upon the leaf, written by the poet of all time himself; the chair preserved at Antwerp, in which Rubens sat when he painted the immortal "Descent from the Cross;" or the telescope, preserved in the Museum of Florence, which aided Galileo in his sublime discoveries. Who would not look with veneration upon the undoubted arrow of William Tell—the swords of Wallace or of Hampden—or the Bible whose leaves were turned by some stern old father of the faith?

Thus the principle of reliquism is hallowed and enshrined by love. But from this germ of purity how numerous the progeny of errors and superstitions! Men, in their admiration of the great, and of all that appertained to them, have forgotten that goodness is a component part of true greatness, and have made fools of themselves for the jaw-bone of a saint, the toe-nail of an apostle, the handkerchief a king blew his nose in, or the rope that hanged a criminal. Desiring to rescue some slight token from the graves of their predecessors, they have confounded the famous and the infamous, the renowned and the notorious. Great saints, great sinners; great philosophers, great quacks; great conquerors, great murderers; great ministers, great thieves; each and all have had their ad-

mirers, ready to ransack earth, from the equator to either pole, to find a relic of them.

The reliquism of modern times dates its origin from the centuries immediately preceding the Crusades. The first pilgrims to the Holy Land brought back to Europe thousands of apocryphal relics, in the purchase of which they had expended all their store. The greatest favourite was the wood of the true cross, which, like the oil of the widow, never diminished. It is generally asserted, in the traditions of the Romish Church, that the Empress Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, first discovered the veritable "*true cross*" in her pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Emperor Theodosius made a present of the greater part of it to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, by whom it was studded with precious stones, and deposited in the principal church of that city. It was carried away by the Huns, by whom it was burnt, after they had extracted the valuable jewels it contained. Fragments, purporting to have been cut from it were, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to be found in almost every church in Europe, and would, if collected together in one place, have been almost sufficient to have built a cathedral. Happy was the sinner who could get a sight of one of them; happier he who possessed one! To obtain them the greatest dangers were cheerfully braved. They were thought to preserve from all evils, and to cure the most inveterate diseases. Annual pil-

grimages were made to the shrines that contained them, and considerable revenues collected from the devotees.

Next in renown were those precious relics, the tears of the Saviour. By whom and in what manner they were preserved, the pilgrims did not often inquire. Their genuineness was vouched by the Christians of the Holy Land, and that was sufficient. Tears of the Virgin Mary, and tears of St. Peter, were also to be had, carefully enclosed in little caskets, which the pious might wear in their bosoms. After the tears the next most precious relics were drops of the blood of Jesus and the martyrs. Hair and toe-nails were also in great repute, and were sold at extravagant prices. Thousands of pilgrims annually visited Palestine in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to purchase pretended relics for the home market. The majority of them had no other means of subsistence than the profits thus obtained. Many a nail, cut from the filthy foot of some unscrupulous ecclesiastic, was sold at a diamond's price, within six months after its severance from its parent toe, upon the supposition that it had once belonged to a saint. Peter's toes were uncommonly prolific, for there were nails enough in Europe, at the time of the Council of Clermont, to have filled a sack, all of which were devoutly believed to have grown on the sacred feet of that great apostle. Some of them are still shown in

the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. The pious come from a distance of a hundred German miles to feast their eyes upon them.

At Port Royal, in Paris, is kept with great care a thorn, which the priests of that seminary assert to be one of the identical thorns that bound the holy head of the Son of God. How it came there, and by whom it was preserved, has never been explained. This is the famous thorn, celebrated in the long dissensions of the Jansenists and the Molenists, and which worked the miraculous cure upon Mademoiselle Perrier: by merely kissing it, she was cured of a disease of the eyes of long standing.*

What traveller is unacquainted with the Santa Scala, or Holy Stairs, at Rome? They were brought from Jerusalem along with the true cross, by the Empress Helen, and were taken from the house which, according to popular tradition, was inhabited by Pontius Pilate. They are said to be the steps which Jesus ascended and descended when brought into the presence of the Roman governor. They are held in the greatest veneration at Rome: it is sacrilegious to walk upon them. The knees of the faithful must alone touch them in ascending or descending, and that only after they have reverentially kissed them.

Europe still swarms with these religious relics. There is hardly a Roman Catholic church in

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.

Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, or Belgium, without one or more of them. Even the poorly endowed churches of the villages boast the possession of miraculous thigh-bones of the innumerable saints of the Romish calendar. Aix-la-Chapelle is proud of the veritable *châsse,* or thigh-bone of Charlemagne, which cures lameness. Halle has a thigh-bone of the Virgin Mary; Spain has seven or eight, all said to be undoubted relics. Brussels at one time preserved, and perhaps does now, the teeth of St. Gudule. The faithful, who suffered from the tooth-ache, had only to pray, look at them, and be cured. Some of these holy bones have been buried in different parts of the Continent. After a certain lapse of time, water is said to ooze from them, which soon forms a spring, and cures all the diseases of the faithful. At a church in Halle, there is a famous thigh-bone, which cures barrenness in women. Of this bone, which is under the special superintendence of the Virgin, a pleasant story is related by the incredulous. There resided at Ghent a couple who were blessed with all the riches of this world, but whose happiness was sore troubled by the want of children. Great was the grief of the lady, who was both beautiful and loving, and many her lamentations to her husband. The latter, annoyed by her unceasing sorrow, advised her to make a pilgrimage to the celebrated *châsse* of the Virgin. She went, was absent a week, and returned with a face

all radiant with joy and pleasure. Her lamentations ceased, and, in nine months afterwards, she brought forth a son. But, oh! the instability of human joys! The babe, so long desired and so greatly beloved, survived but a few months. Two years passed over the heads of the disconsolate couple, and no second child appeared to cheer their fire-side. A third year passed away with the same result, and the lady once more began to weep. "Cheer up, my love," said her husband, "and go to the holy *châsse,* at Halle; perhaps the Virgin will again listen to your prayers." The lady took courage at the thought, wiped away her tears, and proceeded on the morrow towards Halle. She was absent only three days, and returned home sad, weeping, and sorrow-stricken. "What is the matter?" said her husband; "is the Virgin unwilling to listen to your prayers?" "The Virgin is willing enough," said the disconsolate wife, "and will do what she can for me; but I shall never have any more children! *The priest! the priest!*—He is gone from Halle, and nobody knows where to find him!"

It is curious to remark the avidity manifested in all ages, and in all countries, to obtain possession of some relic of any persons who have been much spoken of, even for their crimes. When William Longbeard, leader of the populace of London, in the reign of Richard I, was hanged at Smithfield, the utmost eagerness was shown to obtain a hair from his head, or a shred from his garments.

Women came from Essex, Kent, Suffolk, Sussex, and all the surrounding counties, to collect the mould at the foot of his gallows. A hair of his beard was believed to preserve from evil spirits, and a piece of his clothes from aches and pains.

In more modern days, a similar avidity was shown to obtain a relic of the luckless Masaniello, the fisherman of Naples. After he had been raised by mob favour to a height of power more despotic than monarch ever wielded, he was shot by the same populace in the streets, as if he had been a mad dog. His headless trunk was dragged through the mire for several hours, and cast at night-fall into the city ditch. On the morrow the tide of popular feeling turned once more in his favour. His corpse was sought, arrayed in royal robes, and buried magnificently by torch-light in the cathedral, ten thousand armed men, and as many mourners, attending at the ceremony. The fisherman's dress which he had worn was rent into shreds by the crowd, to be preserved as relics; the door of his hut was pulled off its hinges by a mob of women, and eagerly cut up into small pieces, to be made into images, caskets, and other mementos. The scanty furniture of his poor abode became of more value than the adornments of a palace; the ground he had walked upon was considered sacred, and, being collected in small phials, was sold at its weight in gold, and worn in the bosom as an amulet.

Almost as extraordinary was the frenzy manifested by the populace of Paris on the execution of the atrocious Marchioness de Brinvilliers. There were grounds for the popular wonder in the case of Masaniello, who was unstained with personal crimes. But the career of Madame de Brinvilliers was of a nature to excite no other feelings than disgust and abhorrence. She was convicted of poisoning several persons, and sentenced to be burned in the Place de Grève, and to have her ashes scattered to the winds. On the day of her execution, the populace, struck by her gracefulness and beauty, inveighed against the severity of her sentence. Their pity soon increased to admiration, and, ere evening, she was considered a saint. Her ashes were industriously collected, even the charred wood, which had aided to consume her, was eagerly purchased by the populace. Her ashes were thought to preserve from witchcraft.

In England many persons have a singular love for the relics of thieves and murderers, or other great criminals. The ropes with which they have been hanged are very often bought by collectors at a guinea per foot. Great sums were paid for the rope which hanged Dr. Dodd, and for those more recently which did justice upon Mr. Fauntleroy for forgery, and on Thurtell for the murder of Mr. Weare. The murder of Maria Marten, by Corder, in the year 1828, excited the greatest interest all

over the country. People came from Wales and Scotland, and even from Ireland, to visit the barn where the body of the murdered woman was buried. Every one of them was anxious to carry away some memorial of his visit. Pieces of the barn-door, tiles from the roof, and, above all, the clothes of the poor victim, were eagerly sought after. A lock of her hair was sold for two guineas, and the purchaser thought himself fortunate in getting it so cheaply.

So great was the concourse of people to visit the house in Camberwell Lane, where Greenacre murdered Hannah Brown, in 1837, that it was found necessary to station a strong detachment of police on the spot. The crowd was so eager to obtain a relic of the house of this atrocious criminal, that the police were obliged to employ force to prevent the tables and chairs, and even the doors, from being carried away.

In earlier times, a singular superstition was attached to the hand of a criminal who had suffered execution. It was thought that by merely rubbing the dead hand on the body, the patient afflicted with the king's evil would be instantly cured. The executioner at Newgate, sixty or seventy years ago, derived no inconsiderable revenue from this foolish practice. The possession of the hand was thought to be of still greater efficacy in the cure of diseases and the prevention of misfortunes. In the

time of Charles II. as much as ten guineas was thought a small price for one of these disgusting relics.

When the maniac, Thom, or Courtenay, was shot, in the spring of 1838, the relic-hunters were immediately in motion to obtain a memento of so extraordinary an individual. His long, black beard and hair, which were cut off by the surgeons, fell into the hands of his disciples, by whom they are treasured with the utmost reverence. A lock of his hair commands a great price, not only amongst his followers, but among the more wealthy inhabitants of Canterbury and its neighbourhood. The tree against which he fell when he was shot, has already been stripped of all its bark by the curious, and bids fair to be entirely demolished within a twelvemonth. A letter, with his signature to it, is paid for in gold coins; and his favourite horse promises to become as celebrated as his master. Parties of ladies and gentlemen have come to Boughton from a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, to visit the scene of that fatal affray, and stroke on the back the horse of the "mad Knight of Malta." If a strict watch had not been kept over his grave for months, the body would have been disinterred, and the bones carried away as memorials.

Among the Chinese no relics are more valued than the *boots* which have been worn by an upright

magistrate. In Davis's interesting Description of the Empire of China, we are informed, that whenever a judge of unusual integrity resigns his situation, the people all congregate to do him honour. If he leaves the city where he has presided, the crowd accompany him from his residence to the gates, where his boots are drawn off with great ceremony, to be preserved in the hall of justice. Their place is immediately supplied by a new pair, which, in their turn, are drawn off to make room for others before he has worn them five minutes, it being considered sufficient to consecrate them that he should have merely drawn them on.

Among the most favourite relics of modern times, in Europe, are Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, Napoleon's willow, and the table at Waterloo, on which the Emperor wrote his despatches. Snuff-boxes of Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, are comparatively rare, though there are doubtless more of them in the market than were ever made of the wood planted by the great bard. Many a piece of alien wood passes under this name. The same may be said of Napoleon's table at Waterloo. The original has long since been destroyed, and a round dozen of counterfeits along with it. Many preserve the simple stick of wood; others have them cut into brooches and every variety of ornament; but by far the greater number prefer them as snuff-boxes. In France they are made into *bonbonnières*, and

are much esteemed by the many thousands whose cheeks still glow, and whose eyes still sparkle at the name of Napoleon.

Bullets from the field of Waterloo, and buttons from the coats of the soldiers who fell in the fight, are still favourite relics in Europe. But the same ingenuity which found new tables after the old one was destroyed, has cast new bullets for the curious. Many a one who thinks himself the possessor of a bullet which aided in giving peace to the world on that memorable day, is the owner of a dump, first extracted from the ore a dozen years afterwards. Let all lovers of genuine relics look well to their money before they part with it to the ciceroni that swarm in the village of Waterloo.

Few travellers stop at the lonely isle of St. Helena, without cutting a twig from the willow that droops over the grave of Napoleon. Many of them have since been planted in different parts of Europe, and have grown into trees as large as their parent. Relic-hunters, who are unable to procure a twig of the original, are content with one from these. Several of them are growing in the neighbourhood of London, more prized by their cultivators than any other tree in their gardens.

But in relics, as in everything else, there is the use and the abuse. The undoubted relics of great men, or great events, will always possess attractions for the thinking and refined. There are few

who would not join with Cowley in the extravagant wish introduced in his lines "written while sitting in a chair made of the remains of the ship in which Sir Francis Drake sailed round the world :"—

> And I myself, who now love quiet too,
> Almost as much as any chair can do,
> Would yet a journey take
> An old wheel of that chariot to see,
> Which Phaeton so rashly brake.

MODERN PROPHECIES.

An epidemic terror of the end of the world has several times spread over the nations. The most remarkable was that which seized Christendom about the middle of the tenth century. Numbers of fanatics appeared in France, Germany, and Italy at that time, preaching that the thousand years prophesied in the Apocalypse as the term of the world's duration, were about to expire, and that the Son of Man would appear in the clouds to judge the godly and the ungodly. The delusion appears to have been discouraged by the church, but it nevertheless spread rapidly among the people.*

The scene of the last judgment was expected to be at Jerusalem. In the year 999, the number of pilgrims proceeding eastward, to await the coming of the Lord in that city, was so great that they were compared to a desolating army. Most of them sold their goods and possessions before they quitted Europe, and lived upon the proceeds in the Holy Land. Buildings of every sort were suffered to fall into ruins. It was thought useless to repair them, when the end of the world was so near.

* See Gibbon and Voltaire for further notice of this subject.

Many noble edifices were deliberately pulled down. Even churches, usually so well maintained, shared the general neglect. Knights, citizens, and serfs, travelled eastwards in company, taking with them their wives and children, singing psalms as they went, and looking with fearful eyes upon the sky, which they expected each minute to open, to let the Son of God descend in his glory.

During the thousandth year the number of pilgrims increased. Most of them were smitten with terror as with a plague. Every phenomenon of nature filled them with alarm. A thunder-storm sent them all upon their knees in mid-march. It was the opinion that thunder was the voice of God, announcing the day of judgment. Numbers expected the earth to open, and give up its dead at the sound. Every meteor in the sky seen at Jerusalem brought the whole Christian population into the streets to weep and pray. The pilgrims on the road were in the same alarm :—

> Lorsque, pendant la nuit, un globe de lumière
> S'échappa quelquefois de la voûte des cieux,
> Et traça dans sa chûte un long sillon de feux,
> La troupe suspendit sa marche solitaire.*

Fanatic preachers kept up the flame of terror. Every shooting star furnished occasion for a sermon, in which the sublimity of the approaching judgment was the principal topic.

* Charlemagne. Poême Epique, par Lucien Buonaparte.

The appearance of comets has been often thought to foretell the speedy dissolution of this world. Part of this belief still exists; but the comet is no longer looked upon as the sign, but the agent of destruction. So lately as in the year 1832 the greatest alarm spread over the Continent of Europe, especially in Germany, lest the comet, whose appearance was then foretold by astronomers, should destroy the earth. The danger of our globe was gravely discussed. Many persons refrained from undertaking or concluding any business during that year, in consequence solely of their apprehension that this terrible comet would dash us and our world to atoms.

During seasons of great pestilence men have often believed the prophecies of crazed fanatics, that the end of the world was come. Credulity is always greatest in times of calamity. Prophecies of all sorts are rife on such occasions, and are readily believed, whether for good or evil. During the great plague, which ravaged all Europe, between the years 1345 and 1350, it was generally considered that the end of the world was at hand. Pretended prophets were to be found in all the principal cities of Germany, France, and Italy, predicting that within ten years the trump of the Archangel would sound, and the Saviour appear in the clouds to call the earth to judgment.

No little consternation was created in London in 1736 by the prophecy of the famous Whiston, that

the world would be destroyed in that year, on the 13th of October. Crowds of people went out on the appointed day to Islington, Hampstead, and the fields intervening, to see the destruction of London, which was to be the "beginning of the end." A satirical account of this folly is given in Swift's Miscellanies, vol. iii. entitled, "A True and Faithful Narrative of what passed in London on a Rumour of the Day of Judgment." An authentic narrative of this delusion would be interesting; but this solemn witticism of Pope and Gay is not to be depended upon.

In the year 1761 the citizens of London were again frightened out of their wits by two shocks of an earthquake, and the prophecy of a third, which was to destroy them altogether. The first shock was felt on the 8th of February, and threw down several chimneys in the neighbourhood of Limehouse and Poplar; the second happened on the 8th of March, and was chiefly felt in the north of London, and towards Hampstead and Highgate. It soon became the subject of general remark, that there was exactly an interval of a month between the shocks; and a crack-brained fellow, named Bell, a soldier in the Life Guards, was so impressed with the idea that there would be a third in another month, that he lost his senses altogether, and ran about the streets predicting the destruction of London on the 5th of April. Most people thought that the *first* would have been a more

appropriate day; but there were not wanting thousands who confidently believed the prediction, and took measures to transport themselves and families from the scene of the impending calamity. As the awful day approached, the excitement became intense, and great numbers of credulous people resorted to all the villages within a circuit of twenty miles, awaiting the doom of London. Islington, Highgate, Hampstead, Harrow, and Blackheath, were crowded with panic-stricken fugitives, who paid exorbitant prices for accommodation to the housekeepers of these secure retreats. Such as could not afford to pay for lodgings at any of those places, remained in London until two or three days before the time, and then encamped in the surrounding fields, awaiting the tremendous shock which was to lay their high city all level with the dust. As happened during a similar panic in the time of Henry VIII, the fear became contagious, and hundreds who had laughed at the prediction a week before, packed up their goods, when they saw others doing so, and hastened away. The river was thought to be a place of great security, and all the merchant vessels in the port were filled with people, who passed the night between the 4th and 5th on board, expecting every instant to see St. Paul's totter, and the towers of Westminster Abbey rock in the wind and fall amid a cloud of dust. The greater part of the fugitives returned on the following day, convinced that the

prophet was a false one; but many judged it more prudent to allow a week to elapse before they trusted their dear limbs in London. Bell lost all credit in a short time, and was looked upon even by the most credulous as a mere madman. He tried some other prophecies, but nobody was deceived by them; and, in a few months afterwards, he was confined in a lunatic asylum.

A panic terror of the end of the world seized the good people of Leeds and its neighbourhood in the year 1806. It arose from the following circumstances. A hen, in a village close by, laid eggs, on which were inscribed, in legible characters, the words "*Christ is coming*." Great numbers visited the spot, and examined these wondrous eggs, convinced that the day of judgment was near at hand. Like sailors in a storm, expecting every instant to go to the bottom, the believers suddenly became religious, prayed violently, and flattered themselves that they repented them of their evil courses. But a plain tale soon put them down, and quenched their religion entirely. Some gentlemen, hearing of the matter, went one fine morning, and caught the poor hen in the act of laying one of her miraculous eggs. They soon ascertained beyond doubt that the egg had been inscribed with some corrosive ink, and cruelly forced up again into the bird's body. At this explanation, those who had prayed, now laughed, and the world wagged as merrily as of yore.

At the time of the plague in Milan, in 1630, of

which so affecting a description has been left us by Ripamonte, in his interesting work *De Peste Mediolani*, the people, in their distress, listened with avidity to the predictions of astrologers and other impostors. It is singular enough that the plague was foretold a year before it broke out. A large comet appearing in 1628, the opinions of astrologers were divided with regard to it. Some insisted that it was a forerunner of a bloody war; others maintained that it predicted a great famine; but the greater number, founding their judgment upon its pale colour, thought it portended a pestilence. The fulfilment of their prediction brought them into great repute while the plague was raging.

Other prophecies were current, which were asserted to have been delivered hundreds of years previously. They had a most pernicious effect upon the mind of the vulgar, as they induced a belief in fatalism. By taking away the hope of recovery—that greatest balm in every malady—they increased threefold the ravages of the disease. One singular prediction almost drove the unhappy people mad. An ancient couplet, preserved for ages by tradition, foretold, that in the year 1630 the devil would poison all Milan. Early one morning in April, and before the pestilence had reached its height, the passengers were surprised to see that all the doors in the principal streets of the city were marked with a curious daub, or spot, as if a sponge, filled with the purulent matter of the plague-sores,

had been pressed against them. The whole population were speedily in movement to remark the strange appearance, and the greatest alarm spread rapidly. Every means was taken to discover the perpetrators, but in vain. At last the ancient prophecy was remembered, and prayers were offered up in all the churches that the machinations of the Evil One might be defeated. Many persons were of opinion that the emissaries of foreign powers were employed to spread infectious poison over the city; but by far the greater number were convinced that the powers of hell had conspired against them, and that the infection was spread by supernatural agencies. In the mean time the plague increased fearfully. Distrust and alarm took possession of every mind. Everything was believed to have been poisoned by the devil; the waters of the wells, the standing corn in the fields, and the fruit upon the trees. It was believed that all objects of touch were poisoned; the walls of the houses, the pavement of the streets, and the very handles of the doors. The populace were raised to a pitch of ungovernable fury. A strict watch was kept for the devil's emissaries, and any man who wanted to be rid of an enemy, had only to say that he had seen him besmearing a door with ointment; his fate was certain death at the hands of the mob. An old man, upwards of eighty years of age, a daily frequenter of the church of St. Antonio, was seen, on rising from his knees, to wipe with the skirt

of his cloak the stool on which he was about to sit down. A cry was raised immediately that he was besmearing the seat with poison. A mob of women, by whom the church was crowded, seized hold of the feeble old man, and dragged him out by the hair of his head, with horrid oaths and imprecations. He was trailed in this manner through the mire to the house of the municipal judge, that he might be put to the rack, and forced to discover his accomplices; but he expired on the way. Many other victims were sacrificed to the popular fury. One Mora, who appears to have been half a chemist and half a barber, was accused of being in league with the devil to poison Milan. His house was surrounded, and a number of chemical preparations were found. The poor man asserted, that they were intended as preservatives against infection; but some physicians, to whom they were submitted, declared they were poison. Mora was put to the rack, where he for a long time asserted his innocence. He confessed at last, when his courage was worn down by torture, that he was in league with the devil and foreign powers to poison the whole city; that he had anointed the doors, and infected the fountains of water. He named several persons as his accomplices, who were apprehended and put to a similar torture. They were all found guilty, and executed. Mora's house was rased to the ground, and a column erected on the spot, with an inscription to commemorate his guilt.

While the public mind was filled with these marvellous occurrences, the plague continued to increase. The crowds that were brought together to witness the executions, spread the infection among one another. But the fury of their passions, and the extent of their credulity, kept pace with the violence of the plague; every wonderful and preposterous story was believed. One, in particular, occupied them to the exclusion, for a long time, of every other. The Devil himself had been seen. He had taken a house in Milan, in which he prepared his poisonous unguents, and furnished them to his emissaries for distribution. One man had brooded over such tales till he became firmly convinced that the wild flights of his own fancy were realities. He stationed himself in the market-place of Milan, and related the following story to the crowds that gathered round him. He was standing, he said, at the door of the cathedral, late in the evening, and when there was nobody nigh, he saw a dark-coloured chariot, drawn by six milk-white horses, stop close beside him. The chariot was followed by a numerous train of domestics in dark liveries, mounted on dark-coloured steeds. In the chariot there sat a tall stranger of a majestic aspect; his long black hair floated in the wind—fire flashed from his large black eyes, and a curl of ineffable scorn dwelt upon his lips. The look of the stranger was so sublime that he was awed, and trembled with fear when he gazed

upon him. His complexion was much darker than that of any man he had ever seen, and the atmosphere around him was hot and suffocating. He perceived immediately that he was a being of another world. The stranger, seeing his trepidation, asked him blandly, yet majestically, to mount beside him. He had no power to refuse, and before he was well aware that he had moved, he found himself in the chariot. Onwards they went, with the rapidity of the wind, the stranger speaking no word, until they stopped before a door in the high-street of Milan. There was a crowd of people in the street, but, to his great surprise, no one seemed to notice the extraordinary equipage and its numerous train. From this he concluded that they were invisible. The house at which they stopped appeared to be a shop, but the interior was like a vast half-ruined palace. He went with his mysterious guide through several large and dimly-lighted rooms. In one of them, surrounded by huge pillars of marble, a senate of ghosts was assembled, debating on the progress of the plague. Other parts of the building were enveloped in the thickest darkness, illumined at intervals by flashes of lightning, which allowed him to distinguish a number of gibing and chattering skeletons, running about and pursuing each other, or playing at leap-frog over one another's backs. At the rear of the mansion was a wild, uncultivated plot of ground, in the midst of which arose a black rock. Down its sides rushed with fearful noise a torrent of poisonous water, which, insinuating itself

through the soil, penetrated to all the springs of the city, and rendered them unfit for use. After he had been shown all this, the stranger led him into another large chamber, filled with gold and precious stones, all of which he offered him if he would kneel down and worship him, and consent to smear the doors and houses of Milan with a pestiferous salve which he held out to him. He now knew him to be the Devil, and in that moment of temptation, prayed to God to give him strength to resist. His prayer was heard—he refused the bribe. The stranger scowled horribly upon him—a loud clap of thunder burst over his head—the vivid lightning flashed in his eyes, and the next moment he found himself standing alone at the porch of the cathedral. He repeated this strange tale day after day, without any variation, and all the populace were firm believers in its truth. Repeated search was made to discover the mysterious house, but all in vain. The man pointed out several as resembling it, which were searched by the police; but the Demon of the Pestilence was not to be found, nor the hall of ghosts, nor the poisonous fountain. But the minds of the people were so impressed with the idea that scores of witnesses, half crazed by disease, came forward to swear that they also had seen the diabolical stranger, and had heard his chariot, drawn by the milk-white steeds, rumbling over the streets at midnight with a sound louder than thunder.

The number of persons who confessed that they were employed by the Devil to distribute poison is almost incredible. An epidemic frenzy was abroad, which seemed to be as contagious as the plague. Imagination was as disordered as the body, and day after day persons came voluntarily forward to accuse themselves. They generally had the marks of disease upon them, and some died in the act of confession.

During the great plague of London, in 1665, the people listened with similar avidity to the predictions of quacks and fanatics. Defoe says, that at that time the people were more addicted to prophecies and astronomical conjurations, dreams, and old wives' tales than ever they were before or since. Almanacs, and their predictions, frightened them terribly. Even the year before the plague broke out, they were greatly alarmed by the comet which then appeared, and anticipated that famine, pestilence, or fire would follow. Enthusiasts, while yet the disease had made but little progress, ran about the streets, predicting that in a few days London would be destroyed.

A still more singular instance of the faith in predictions occurred in London in the year 1524. The city swarmed at that time with fortune-tellers and astrologers, who were consulted daily by people of every class in society on the secrets of futurity. As early as the month of June 1523, several of them concurred in predicting that, on the 1st day

of February, 1524, the waters of the Thames would swell to such a height as to overflow the whole city of London, and wash away ten thousand houses. The prophecy met implicit belief. It was reiterated with the utmost confidence month after month, until so much alarm was excited that many families packed up their goods, and removed into Kent and Essex. As the time drew nigh, the number of these emigrants increased. In January, droves of workmen might be seen, followed by their wives and children, trudging on foot to the villages within fifteen or twenty miles, to await the catastrophe. People of a higher class were also to be seen, in waggons and other vehicles, bound on a similar errand. By the middle of January, at least twenty thousand persons had quitted the doomed city, leaving nothing but the bare walls of their homes to be swept away by the impending floods. Many of the richer sort took up their abode on the heights of Highgate, Hampstead, and Blackheath; and some erected tents as far away as Waltham Abbey, on the north, and Croydon, on the south of the Thames. Bolton, the prior of St. Bartholomew's, was so alarmed that he erected, at very great expense, a sort of fortress at Harrow-on-the-Hill, which he stocked with provisions for two months. On the 24th of January, a week before the awful day which was to see the destruction of London, he removed thither, with the brethren and officers of the priory and

all his household. A number of boats were conveyed in waggons to his fortress, furnished abundantly with expert rowers, in case the flood, reaching so high as Harrow, should force them to go further for a resting-place. Many wealthy citizens prayed to share his retreat, but the Prior, with a prudent forethought, admitted only his personal friends, and those who brought stores of eatables for the blockade.

At last the morn, big with the fate of London, appeared in the east. The wondering crowds were astir at an early hour to watch the rising of the waters. The inundation, it was predicted, would be gradual, not sudden; so that they expected to have plenty of time to escape, as soon as they saw the bosom of old Thames heave beyond the usual mark. But the majority were too much alarmed to trust to this, and thought themselves safer ten or twenty miles off. The Thames, unmindful of the foolish crowds upon its banks, flowed on quietly as of yore. The tide ebbed at its usual hour, flowed to its usual height, and then ebbed again, just as if twenty astrologers had not pledged their words to the contrary. Blank were their faces as evening approached, and as blank grew the faces of the citizens to think that they had made such fools of themselves. At last night set in, and the obstinate river would not lift its waters to sweep away even one house out of the ten thousand. Still, however, the people were afraid to go to

sleep. Many hundreds remained up till dawn of the next day, lest the deluge should come upon them like a thief in the night.

On the morrow, it was seriously discussed whether it would not be advisable to duck the false prophets in the river. Luckily for them, they thought of an expedient which allayed the popular fury. They asserted that, by an error (a very slight one) of a little figure, they had fixed the date of this awful inundation a whole century too early. The stars were right after all, and they, erring mortals, were wrong. The present generation of cockneys was safe, and London would be washed away, not in 1524, but in 1624. At this announcement, Bolton, the prior, dismantled his fortress, and the weary emigrants came back.

An eye-witness of the great fire of London, in an account preserved among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, and recently published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, relates another instance of the credulity of the Londoners. The writer, who accompanied the Duke of York day by day through the district included between the Fleet-bridge and the Thames, states that, in their efforts to check the progress of the flames, they were much impeded by the superstition of the people. Mother Shipton, in one of her prophecies, had said that London would be reduced to ashes, and they refused to make

any efforts to prevent it.* A son of the noted Sir Kenelm Digby, who was also a pretender to the gifts of prophecy, persuaded them that no power on earth could prevent the fulfilment of the prediction; for it was written in the great book of fate that London was to be destroyed. Hundreds of persons, who might have rendered valuable assistance, and saved whole parishes from devastation, folded their arms and looked on. As many more gave themselves up, with the less compunction, to plunder a city which they could not save.

The prophecies of Mother Shipton are still believed in many of the rural districts of England. In cottages and servants' halls her reputation is great; and she rules, the most popular of British prophets, among all the uneducated, or half-educated, portions of the community. She is generally supposed to have been born at Knaresborough, in the reign of Henry VII, and to have sold her soul to the Devil for the power of foretelling future events. Though during her lifetime she was looked upon as a witch, she yet escaped the witch's fate, and died peaceably in her bed at an extreme old age, near Clifton in Yorkshire. A stone is said to have been erected to her memory in the

* This prophecy seems to have been that set forth at length in the popular Life of Mother Shipton:—

"When fate to England shall restore
A king to reign as heretofore,
Great death in London shall be though,
And many houses be laid low."

church-yard of that place, with the following epitaph :—

" Here lies she who never lied ;
Whose skill often has been tried :
Her prophecies shall still survive,
And ever keep her name alive."

" Never a day passed," says her traditionary biography, " wherein she did not relate something remarkable, and that required the most serious consideration. People flocked to her from far and near, her fame was so great. They went to her of all sorts, both old and young, rich and poor, especially young maidens, to be resolved of their doubts relating to things to come ; and all returned wonderfully satisfied in the explanations she gave to their questions." Among the rest, went the Abbot of Beverley, to whom she foretold the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII ; his marriage with Anne Boleyn ; the fires for heretics in Smithfield, and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. She also foretold the accession of James I, adding that, with him,

" From the cold North,
Every evil should come forth."

On a subsequent visit she uttered another prophecy, which, in the opinion of her believers, still remains unfulfilled, but may be expected to be realised during the present century :—

" The time shall come when seas of blood
Shall mingle with a greater flood.
Great noise there shall be heard—great shouts and cries,
And seas shall thunder louder than the skies ;

Then shall three lions fight with three, and bring
Joy to a people, honour to a king.
That fiery year as soon as o'er,
Peace shall then be as before;
Plenty shall everywhere be found,
And men with swords shall plough the ground.'

But the most famous of all her prophecies is one relating to London. Thousands of persons still shudder to think of the woes that are to burst over this unhappy realm, when London and Highgate are joined by one continuous line of houses. This junction, which, if the rage for building lasts much longer, in the same proportion as heretofore, bids fair to be soon accomplished, was predicted by her shortly before her death. Revolutions—the fall of mighty monarchs, and the shedding of much blood are to signalise that event. The yerv angels, afflicted by our woes, are to turn aside their heads, and weep for hapless Britain.

But great as is the fame of Mother Shipton, she ranks but second in the list of British prophets. Merlin, the mighty Merlin, stands alone in his high pre-eminence—the first and greatest. As old Drayton sings, in his Poly-olbion :—

" Of Merlin and his skill what region doth not hear?
The world shall still be full of Merlin every year.
A thousand lingering years his prophecies have run,
And scarcely shall have end till time itself be done."

Spenser, in his divine poem, has given us a powerful description of this renowned seer—

" ———who had in magic more insight
Than ever him before, or after, living wight.

" For he by words could call out of the sky
Both sun and moon, and make them him obey;
The land to sea, and sea to mainland dry,
And darksome night he eke could turn to day—
Huge hosts of men he could, alone, dismay.
And hosts of men and meanest things could frame,
Whenso him list his enemies to fray,
That to this day, for terror of his name,
The fiends do quake, when any him to them does name.

" And soothe men say that he was not the sonne,
Of mortal sire or other living wighte,
But wondrously begotten and begoune
By false illusion of a guileful sprite,
On a faire ladye nun."

In these verses the poet has preserved the popular belief with regard to Merlin, who is generally supposed to have been a contemporary of Vortigern. Opinion is divided as to whether he were a real personage, or a mere impersonation, formed by the poetic fancy of a credulous people. It seems most probable that such a man did exist, and that, possessing knowledge as much above the comprehension of his age, as that possessed by Friar Bacon was beyond the reach of his, he was endowed by the wondering crowd with the supernatural attributes that Spenser has enumerated.

Geoffrey of Monmouth translated Merlin's poetical odes, or prophecies, into Latin prose, and he was much reverenced, not only by Geoffrey, but by most of the old annalists. In a "*Life of Merlin, with his*

Prophecies and Predictions, interpreted and made good by our English Annals," by Thomas Heywood, published in the reign of Charles I, we find several of these pretended prophecies. They seem, however, to have been all written by Heywood himself. They are in terms too plain and positive to allow any one to doubt for a moment of their having been composed *ex post facto.* Speaking of Richard I, he says :—

" The Lion's heart will 'gainst the Saracen rise,
And purchase from him many a glorious prize;
The rose and lily shall at first unite,
But, parting of the prey prove opposite.
* * * * *
But while abroad these great acts shall be done;
All things at home shall to disorder run.
Cooped up and caged then shall the Lion be,
But, after sufferance, ransomed and set free."

The sapient Thomas Heywood gravely goes on to inform us, that all these things actually came to pass. Upon Richard III. he is equally luminous. He says :—

" A hunch-backed monster, who with teeth is born,
The mockery of art and nature's scorn;
Who from the womb preposterously is hurled,
And, with feet forward, thrust into the world,
Shall, from the lower earth on which he stood,
Wade, every step he mounts, knee-deep in blood.
He shall to th' height of all his hopes aspire,
And, clothed in state, his ugly shape admire;
But, when he thinks himself most safe to stand,
From foreign parts a native whelp shall land."

Another of these prophecies after the event tells

us that Henry VIII. should take the power from Rome, "and bring it home unto his British bower;" that he should "root out from the land all the razored skulls;" and that he should neither spare "man in his rage nor woman in his lust;" and that, in the time of his next successor but one, "there should come in the fagot and the stake." Master Heywood closes Merlin's prophecies at his own day, and does not give even a glimpse of what was to befall England after his decease. Many other prophecies, besides those quoted by him, were, he says, dispersed abroad, in his day, under the name of Merlin; but he gives his readers a taste of one only, and that is the following:—

> "When hempe is ripe and ready to pull,
> Then Englishman beware thy skull."

This prophecy, which, one would think, ought to have put him in mind of the gallows, the not unusual fate of false prophets, and perchance his own, he explains thus:—"In this word HEMPE be five letters. Now, by reckoning the five successive princes from Henry VIII, this prophecy is easily explained: H signifieth King Henry before named; E, Edward, his son, the sixth of that name; M, Mary, who succeeded him; P, Philip of Spain, who, by marrying Queen Mary, participated with her in the English diadem; and, lastly, E signifieth Queen Elizabeth, after whose death there was a great feare that some troubles might have arisen about

the crown." As this did not happen, Heywood, who was a sly rogue in a small way, gets out of the scrape by saying, "Yet proved this augury true, though not according to the former expectation; for, after the peaceful inauguration of King James, there was great mortality, not in London only, but through the whole kingdom, and from which the nation was not quite clean in seven years after."

This is not unlike the subterfuge of Peter of Pontefract, who had prophesied the death and deposition of King John, and who was hanged by that monarch for his pains. A very graphic and amusing account of this pretended prophet is given by Grafton, in his Chronicles of England. There is so much homely vigour about the style of the old annalist, that it would be a pity to give the story in other words than his own.* "In the meanwhile," says he, "the priestes within England had provided them a false and counterfeated prophet, called Peter Wakefielde, a Yorkshire man, who was an hermite, an idle gadder about, and a pratlyng marchant. Now to bring this Peter in credite, and the kyng out of all credite with his people, diverse vaine persons bruted dayly among the commons of the realme, that Christe had twice appered unto him in the shape of a childe, betwene the prieste's handes, once at Yorke, another tyme at Pomfret; and that he had breathed upon him thrice, saying,

* Chronicles of England, by Richard Grafton; London, 1568, p. 106.

'*Peace, peace, peace,*' and teachyng many things, which he anon declared to the bishops, and bid the people amend their naughtie living. Being rapt also in spirite, they sayde he behelde the joyes of heaven and sorowes of hell, for scant were there three in the realme, sayde he, that lived Christainly.

"This counterfeated soothsayer prophecied of King John, that he should reigne no longer than the Ascension-day next followyng, which was in the yere of our Lord 1211, and was the thirteenth yere from his coronation; and this, he said, he had by revelation. Then it was of him demanded, whether he should be slaine or be deposed, or should voluntarily give over the crowne? He aunswered, that he could not tell; but of this he was sure (he sayd), that neither he nor any of his stock or lineage should reigne after that day.

"The king hering of this, laughed much at it, and made but a scoff thereat. 'Tush!' saith he, 'it is but an ideot knave, and such an one as lacketh his right wittes.' But when this foolish prophet had so escaped the daunger of the Kinge's displeasure, and that he made no more of it, he gate him abroad, and prated thereof at large, as he was a very idle vagabond, and used to trattle and talke more than ynough, so that they which loved the King caused him anon after to be apprehended as a malefactor, and to be throwen in prison, the King not yet knowing thereof.

"Anone after the fame of this phantasticall prophet went all the realme over, and his name was knowen everywhere, as foolishnesse is much regarded of the people, where wisdome is not in place; specially because he was then imprisoned for the matter, the rumour was the larger, their wonderynges were the wantoner, their practises the foolisher, their busye talkes and other idle doinges the greater. Continually from thence, as the rude manner of people is, olde gossyps tales went abroade, new tales were invented, fables were added to fables, and lyes grew upon lyes. So that every daye newe slanders were laide upon the King, and not one of them true. Rumors arose, blasphemyes were sprede, the enemyes rejoyced, and treasons by the priestes were mainteyned; and what lykewise was surmised, or other subtiltye practised, all was then fathered upon this foolish prophet, as 'thus saith Peter Wakefield;' 'thus hath he prophecied;' 'and thus it shall come to pass;' yea, many times, when he thought nothing lesse. And when the Ascension-day was come, which was prophecyed of before, King John commanded his royal tent to be spread in the open fielde, passing that day with his noble counseyle and men of honour, in the greatest solemnitie that ever he did before; solacing himself with musickale instrumentes and songs, most in sight among his trustie friendes. When that day was paste in all prosperitie and myrth, his enemyes being confused, turned all into an alle-

gorical understanding to make the prophecie good, and sayde, "he is no longer King, for the Pope reigneth, and not he." [King John was labouring under a sentence of excommunication at the time.]

"Then was the King by his council perswaded that this false prophet had troubled the realme, perverted the heartes of the people, and raysed the commons against him; for his wordes went over the sea, by the help of his prelates, and came to the French King's eare, and gave to him a great encouragement to invade the lande. He had not else done it so sodeinely. But he was most fowly deceived, as all they are and shall be that put their trust in such dark drowsye dreames of hipocrites. The King therefore commanded that he should be hanged up, and his sonne also with him, lest any more false prophets should arise of that race."

Heywood, who was a great stickler for the truth of all sorts of prophecies, gives a much more favourable account of this Peter of Pomfret, or Pontefract, whose fate he would, in all probability, have shared, if he had had the misfortune to have flourished in the same age. He says, that Peter, who was not only a prophet, but a bard, predicted divers of King John's disasters, which fell out accordingly. On being taxed for a lying prophet in having predicted that the King would be deposed before he entered into the fifteenth year of his reign, he answered him boldly, that all he had said was justifiable and true; for that, having given up

his crown to the Pope, and paying him an annual tribute, the Pope reigned, and not he. Heywood thought this explanation to be perfectly satisfactory, and the prophet's faith for ever established.

But to return to Merlin. Of him even to this day it may be said, in the words which Burns has applied to another notorious personage,

> "Great was his power and great his fame;
> Far kenned and noted is his name!"

His reputation is by no means confined to the land of his birth, but extends through most of the nations of Europe. A very curious volume of his Life, Prophecies, and Miracles, written, it is supposed, by Robert de Bosron, was printed at Paris in 1498, which states, that the Devil himself was his father, and that he spoke the instant he was born, and assured his mother, a very virtuous young woman, that she should not die in child-bed with him, as her ill-natured neighbours had predicted. The judge of the district, hearing of so marvellous an occurrence, summoned both mother and child to appear before him; and they went accordingly the same day. To put the wisdom of the young prophet most effectually to the test, the judge asked him if he knew his own father? To which the infant Merlin replied, in a clear, sonorous voice, "Yes, my father is the Devil; and I have his power, and know all things, past, present, and to come." His worship clapped his hands in astonishment, and

took the prudent resolution of not molesting so awful a child, or its mother either.

Early tradition attributes the building of Stonehenge to the power of Merlin. It was believed that those mighty stones were whirled through the air, at his command, from Ireland to Salisbury Plain, and that he arranged them in the form in which they now stand, to commemorate for ever the unhappy fate of three hundred British chiefs, who were massacred on that spot by the Saxons.

At Abergwylly, near Caermarthen, is still shown the cave of the prophet and the scene of his incantations. How beautiful is the description of it given by Spenser in his "Faerie Queene." The lines need no apology for their repetition here, and any sketch of the great prophet of Britain would be incomplete without them :—

"There the wise Merlin, whilom wont (they say),
To make his wonne low underneath the ground,
In a deep delve far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
Whenso he counselled with his sprites encompassed round.

"And if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place;
It is a hideous, hollow cave, they say,
Under a rock that lies a little space
From the swift Barry, tumbling down apace
Amongst the woody hills of Dynevoure;
But dare thou not, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful bower,
For fear the cruel fiendes should thee unwares devour!

" But, standing high aloft, low lay thine eare,
And there such ghastly noise of iron chaines,
And brazen caudrons thou shalt rombling heare,
Which thousand sprites, with long-enduring paines,
Doe tosse, that it will stun thy feeble braines;
And often times great groans and grievous stownds,
When too huge toile and labour them constraines;
And often times loud strokes and ringing sounds
From under that deep rock most horribly rebounds.

" The cause, they say, is this. A little while
Before that Merlin died, he did intend
A brazen wall in compass, to compile
About Cayr Merdin, and did it commend
Unto these sprites to bring to perfect end;
During which work the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he loved, for him in haste did send,
Who thereby forced his workmen to forsake,
Them bound till his return their labour not to slake.

" In the mean time, through that false ladie's traine,
He was surprised, and buried under biere,
Ne ever to his work returned again;
Natheless these fiendes may not their work forbeare,
So greatly his commandement they fear,
But there doe toile and travaile day and night,
Until that brazen wall they up doe reare."*

Amongst other English prophets, a belief in whose power has not been entirely effaced by the light of advancing knowledge, is Robert Nixon, the Cheshire idiot, a contemporary of Mother Shipton. The popular accounts of this man say, that he was born of poor parents, not far from Vale Royal, on the edge of the forest of Delamere. He was brought

* Faerie Queene, b. 3. c. 3. s. 6—13.

up to the plough, but was so ignorant and stupid, that nothing could be made of him. Everybody thought him irretrievably insane, and paid no attention to the strange, unconnected discourses which he held. Many of his prophecies are believed to have been lost in this manner. But they were not always destined to be wasted upon dull and inattentive ears. An incident occurred which brought him into notice, and established his fame as a prophet of the first calibre. He was ploughing in a field when he suddenly stopped from his labour, and, with a wild look and strange gestures, exclaimed, "*Now, Dick! now, Harry! O, ill done, Dick! O, well done, Harry! Harry has gained the day!*" His fellow labourers in the field did not know what to make of this rhapsody; but the next day cleared up the mystery. News was brought by a messenger, in hot haste, that at the very instant when Nixon had thus ejaculated, Richard III. had been slain at the battle of Bosworth, and Henry VII. proclaimed King of England.

It was not long before the fame of the new prophet reached the ears of the King, who expressed a wish to see and converse with him. A messenger was accordingly despatched to bring him to court; but long before he reached Cheshire, Nixon knew and dreaded the honours that awaited him. Indeed it was said, that at the very instant the King expressed the wish, Nixon was, by supernatural means, made acquainted with it, and that he ran

about the town of Over in great distress of mind, calling out, like a madman, that Henry had sent for him, and that he must go to court, and be *clammed;* that is, starved to death. These expressions excited no little wonder; but, on the third day, the messenger arrived, and carried him to court, leaving on the minds of the good people of Cheshire an impression that their prophet was one of the greatest ever born. On his arrival King Henry appeared to be troubled exceedingly at the loss of a valuable diamond, and asked Nixon if he could inform him where it was to be found. Henry had hidden the diamond himself, with a view to test the prophet's skill. Great, therefore, was his surprise when Nixon answered him in the words of the old proverb, "Those who hide can find." From that time forth the King implicitly believed that he had the gift of prophecy, and ordered all his words to be taken down.

During all the time of his residence at court he was in constant fear of being starved to death, and repeatedly told the King that such would be his fate, if he were not allowed to depart, and return into his own country. Henry would not suffer it, but gave strict orders to all his officers and cooks to give him as much to eat as he wanted. He lived so well, that for some time he seemed to be thriving like a nobleman's steward, and growing as fat as an alderman. One day the king went out hunting, when Nixon ran to the palace gate, and

entreated on his knees that he might not be left behind to be starved. The King laughed, and, calling an officer, told him to take especial care of the prophet during his absence, and rode away to the forest. After his departure, the servants of the palace began to jeer at and insult Nixon, whom they imagined to be much better treated than he deserved. Nixon complained to the officer, who, to prevent him from being further molested, locked him up in the King's own closet, and brought him regularly his four meals a day. But it so happened that a messenger arrived from the King to this officer, requiring his immediate presence at Winchester, on a matter of life and death. So great was his haste to obey the King's command, that he mounted on the horse behind the messenger, and rode off, without bestowing a thought upon poor Nixon. He did not return till three days afterwards, when, remembering the prophet for the first time, he went to the King's closet, and found him lying upon the floor, starved to death, as he had predicted.

Among the prophecies of his which are believed to have been fulfilled, are the following, which relate to the times of the Pretender :—

> "*A great man shall come into England,*
> *But the son of a King*
> *Shall take from him the victory.*"

> "*Crows shall drink the blood of many nobles,*
> *And the North shall rise against the South.*"

"*The cock of the North shall be made to flee,*
And his feather be plucked for his pride,
That he shall almost curse the day that he was born."

All these, say his admirers, are as clear as the sun at noon-day. The first denotes the defeat of Prince Charles Edward, at the battle of Culloden, by the Duke of Cumberland; the second, the execution of Lords Derwentwater, Balmerino, and Lovat; and the third, the retreat of the Pretender from the shores of Britain. Among the prophecies that still remain to be accomplished, are the following:—

"*Between seven, eight, and nine,*
In England wonders shall be seen;
Between nine and thirteen
All sorrow shall be done!"

"*Through our own money and our men*
Shall a dreadful war begin.
Between the sickle and the suck
All England shall have a pluck."

"*Foreign nations shall invade England with snow on their helmets, and shall bring plague, famine, and murder in the skirts of their garments.*"

"*The town of Nantwich shall be swept away by a flood.*"

Of the two first of these no explanation has yet been attempted; but some event or other will doubtless be twisted into such a shape as will fit them. The third, relative to the invasion of England by a nation with snow on their helmets, is supposed by the old women to foretell most clearly the coming

war with Russia. As to the last, there are not a few in the town mentioned who devoutly believe that such will be its fate. Happily for their peace of mind, the prophet said nothing of the year that was to witness the awful calamity; so that they think it as likely to be two centuries hence as now.

The popular biographers of Nixon conclude their account of him by saying, that "his prophecies are by some persons thought fables; yet by what has come to pass, it is now thought, and very plainly appears, that most of them have proved, or will prove, true; for which we, on all occasions, ought not only to exert our utmost might to repel by force our enemies, but to refrain from our abandoned and wicked course of life, and to make our continual prayer to God for protection and safety." To this, though a *non sequitur,* every one will cry Amen!

Besides the prophets, there have been the almanack makers, Lilly, Poor Robin, Partridge, and Francis Moore, physician, in England, and Matthew Laensbergh, in France and Belgium. But great as were their pretensions, they were modesty itself in comparison with Merlin, Shipton, and Nixon, who fixed their minds upon higher things than the weather, and who were not so restrained in their flights of fancy as to prophesy for only one year at a time. After such prophets as they, the almanack makers hardly deserve to be mentioned;

no, not even the renowned Partridge, whose wonderful prognostications set all England agog in 1708, and whose death, at a time when he was still alive and kicking, was so pleasantly and satisfactorily proved by Isaac Bickerstaff. The anti-climax would be too palpable, and they and their doings must be left uncommemorated.

POPULAR ADMIRATION FOR GREAT THIEVES.

Jack. Where shall we find such another set of practical philosophers who, to a man, are above the fear of death?

Wat. Sound men and true!

Robin. Of tried courage and indefatigable industry!

Ned. Who is there here that would not die for his friend?

Harry. Who is there here that would betray him for his interest?

Mat. Show me a gang of courtiers that could say as much!

Dialogue of thieves in the Beggars' Opera.

WHETHER it be that the multitude, feeling the pangs of poverty, sympathise with the daring and ingenious depredators who take away the rich man's superfluity, or whether it be the interest that mankind in general feel for the records of perilous adventures, it is certain that the populace of all countries look with admiration upon great and successful thieves. Perhaps both these causes combine to invest their career with charms in the popular eye. Almost every country in Europe has its traditional thief, whose exploits are recorded with all the graces of poetry, and whose trespasses—

" ——— are cited up in rhymes,
And sung by children in succeeding times."*

Those travellers who have made national manners and characteristics their peculiar study, have often observed and remarked upon this feeling. The learned Abbé le Blanc, who resided for some time in England at the commencement of the eighteenth century, says, in his amusing letters on the English and French nations, that he continually met with Englishmen who were not less vain in boasting of the success of their highwaymen than of the bravery of their troops. Tales of their address, their cunning, or their generosity, were in the mouths of everybody, and a noted thief was a kind of hero in high repute. He adds that the mob, in all countries, being easily moved, look in general with concern upon criminals going to the gallows; but an English mob looked upon such scenes with extraordinary interest: they delighted to see them go through their last trials with resolution, and applauded those who were insensible enough to die as they had lived, braving the justice both of God and men: such, he might have added, as the noted robber Macpherson, of whom the old ballad says—

" Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he:
He played a spring, and danced it round
Beneath the gallows tree."

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* Shakspeare's Rape of Lucretia.

Among these traditional thieves the most noted in England, or perhaps in any country, is Robin Hood, a name which popular affection has encircled with a peculiar halo. "He robbed the rich to give to the poor;" and his reward has been an immortality of fame, a tithe of which would be thought more than sufficient to recompense a benefactor of his species. Romance and poetry have been emulous to make him all their own; and the forest of Sherwood, in which he roamed with his merry men, armed with their long bows, and clad in Lincoln green, has become the resort of pilgrims, and a classic spot sacred to his memory. The few virtues he had, which would have ensured him no praise if he had been an honest man, have been blazoned forth by popular renown during seven successive centuries, and will never be forgotten while the English tongue endures. His charity to the poor, and his gallantry and respect for women, have made him the pre-eminent thief of all the world.

Among English thieves of a later date, who has not heard of Claude Duval, Dick Turpin, Jonathan Wild, and Jack Sheppard, those knights of the road and of the town, whose peculiar chivalry formed at once the dread and the delight of England during the eighteenth century? Turpin's fame is unknown to no portion of the male population of England after they have attained the age of ten. His wondrous ride from London to York

has endeared him to the imagination of millions; his cruelty in placing an old woman upon a fire, to force her to tell him where she had hidden her money, is regarded as a good joke; and his proud bearing upon the scaffold is looked upon as a virtuous action. The Abbé le Blanc, writing in 1737, says he was continually entertained with stories of Turpin — how, when he robbed gentlemen, he would generously leave them enough to continue their journey, and exact a pledge from them never to inform against him, and how scrupulous such gentlemen were in keeping their word. He was one day told a story with which the relator was in the highest degree delighted. Turpin, or some other noted robber, stopped a man whom he knew to be very rich, with the usual salutation —"Your money or your life!" but not finding more than five or six guineas about him, he took the liberty of entreating him, in the most affable manner, never to come out so ill provided; adding that, if he fell in with him, and he had no more than such a paltry sum, he would give him a good licking. Another story, told by one of Turpin's admirers, was of a robbery he had committed upon a Mr. C. near Cambridge. He took from this gentleman his watch, his snuff-box, and all his money but two shillings, and, before he left him, required his word of honour that he would not cause him to be pursued or brought before a justice. The promise being given, they both parted very cour-

teously. They afterwards met at Newmarket, and renewed their acquaintance. Mr. C. kept his word religiously; he not only refrained from giving Turpin into custody, but made a boast that he had fairly won some of his money back again in an honest way. Turpin offered to bet with him on some favourite horse, and Mr. C. accepted the wager with as good a grace as he could have done from the best gentleman in England. Turpin lost his bet and paid it immediately, and was so smitten with the generous behaviour of Mr. C. that he told him how deeply he regretted that the trifling affair which had happened between them did not permit them to drink together. The narrator of this anecdote was quite proud that England was the birthplace of such a highwayman.*

* The Abbé, in the second volume, in the letter No. 79, addressed to Monsieur de Buffon, gives the following curious particulars of the robbers of 1737, which are not without interest at this day, if it were only to show the vast improvement which has taken place since that period:—"It is usual, in travelling, to put ten or a dozen guineas in a separate pocket, as a tribute to the first that comes to demand them: the right of passport, which custom has established here in favour of the robbers, who are almost the only highway surveyors in England, has made this necessary; and accordingly the English call these fellows the 'Gentlemen of the Road,' the government letting them exercise their jurisdiction upon travellers without giving them any great molestation. To say the truth, they content themselves with only taking the money of those who obey without disputing; but notwithstanding their boasted humanity, the lives of those who endeavour to get away are not always safe. They are very strict and severe in levying their impost; and if a man has not wherewithal to pay them, he

Not less familiar to the people of England is the career of Jack Sheppard, as brutal a ruffian as ever disgraced his country, but who has claims upon the popular admiration which are very generally acknowledged. He did not, like Robin Hood, plunder the rich to relieve the poor, nor rob with an uncouth sort of courtesy, like Turpin; but he escaped from Newgate with the fetters on his limbs. This achievement, more than once repeated, has encircled his felon brow with the wreath of immortality, and made him quite a pattern thief among the populace. He was no more than twenty-three years of age at the time of his execution, and he died much pitied by the crowd. His adventures were the sole topics of conversation for months; the print-shops were filled with his effigies, and a fine painting of him was made by Sir Richard Thornhill. The following complimentary verses to the artist appeared in the "British Journal" of November 28th, 1724.

may run the chance of getting himself knocked on the head for his poverty.

"About fifteen years ago, these robbers, with the view of maintaining their rights, fixed up papers at the doors of rich people about London, expressly forbidding all persons, of whatsoever quality or condition, from going out of town without ten guineas and a watch about them, on pain of death. In bad times, when there is little or nothing to be got on the roads, these fellows assemble in gangs, to raise contributions even in London itself; and the watchmen seldom trouble themselves to interfere with them in their vocation."

"Thornhill! 'tis thine to gild with fame
Th' obscure, and raise the humble name;
To make the form elude the grave,
And Sheppard from oblivion save!

Apelles Alexander drew —
Cesar is to Aurelius due;
Cromwell in Lilly's works doth shine,
And Sheppard, Thornhill, lives in thine!"

So high was Jack's fame that a pantomime entertainment, called "Harlequin Jack Sheppard," was devised by one Thurmond, and brought out with great success at Drury Lane Theatre. All the scenes were painted from nature, including the public-house that the robber frequented in Clare-market, and the condemned cell from which he had made his escape in Newgate.

The Rev. Mr. Villette, the editor of the "Annals of Newgate," published in 1754, relates a curious sermon which, he says, a friend of his heard delivered by a street-preacher about the time of Jack's execution. The orator, after animadverting on the great care men took of their bodies, and the little care they bestowed upon their souls, continued as follows, by way of exemplifying the position:—"We have a remarkable instance of this in a notorious malefactor, well known by the name of Jack Sheppard. What amazing difficulties has he overcome! what astonishing things has he performed! and all for the sake of a stinking, miserable carcass, hardly worth the hanging! How dexterously did he pick the chain of his padlock with a crooked nail! how manfully

he burst his fetters asunder!—climb up the chimney! — wrench out an iron bar! — break his way through a stone wall! — make the strong door of a dark entry fly before him, till he got upon the leads of the prison! then, fixing a blanket to the wall with a spike, he stole out of the chapel. How intrepidly did he descend to the top of the turner's house! — how cautiously pass down the stair, and make his escape to the street door!

"Oh! that ye were all like Jack Sheppard! Mistake me not, my brethren; I don't mean in a carnal, but in a spiritual sense, for I propose to spiritualise these things. What a shame it would be if we should not think it worth our while to take as much pains, and employ as many deep thoughts, to save our souls as he has done to preserve his body!

"Let me exhort ye, then, to open the locks of your hearts with the nail of repentance! Burst asunder the fetters of your beloved lusts! — mount the chimney of hope! — take from thence the bar of good resolution! — break through the stone wall of despair, and all the strongholds in the dark entry of the valley of the shadow of death! Raise yourselves to the leads of divine meditation! — fix the blanket of faith with the spike of the church! let yourselves down to the turner's house of resignation, and descend the stairs of humility! So shall you come to the door of deliverance from the prison of iniquity, and escape the clutches of that old executioner the Devil!"

But popular as the name of Jack Sheppard was

immediately after he had suffered the last penalty of his crimes, it was as nothing compared to the vast renown which he has acquired in these latter days, after the lapse of a century and a quarter. Poets too often, are not fully appreciated till they have been dead a hundred years, and thieves, it would appear, share the disadvantage. But posterity is grateful if our contemporaries are not; and Jack Sheppard, faintly praised in his own day, shines out in ours the hero of heroes, preeminent above all his fellows. Thornhill made but one picture of the illustrious robber, but Cruikshank has made dozens, and the art of the engraver has multiplied them into thousands and tens of thousands, until the populace of England have become as familiar with Jack's features as they are with their own. Jack, the romantic, is the hero of three goodly volumes, and the delight of the circulating libraries; and the theatres have been smitten with the universal enthusiasm. Managers have set their playmongers at work, and Jack's story has been reproduced in the shape of drama, melodrama, and farce, at half a dozen places of entertainment at once. Never was such a display of popular regard for a hero as was exhibited in London in 1840 for the renowned Jack Sheppard: robbery acquired additional lustre in the popular eye, and not only Englishmen, but foreigners, caught the contagion; and one of the latter, fired by the example, robbed and murdered a venerable, unoffending, and too confiding nobleman, whom it was his especial duty to have obeyed and protected. But he was a

coward and a wretch; — it was a solitary crime — he had not made a daring escape from dungeon walls, or ridden from London to York, and he died amid the execrations of the people, affording a melancholy exemplification of the trite remark, that every man is not great who is desirous of being so.

Jonathan Wild, whose name has been immortalised by Fielding, was no favourite with the people. He had none of the virtues which, combined with crimes, make up the character of the great thief. He was a pitiful fellow, who informed against his comrades, and was afraid of death. This meanness was not to be forgiven by the crowd, and they pelted him with dirt and stones on his way to Tyburn, and expressed their contempt by every possible means. How different was their conduct to Turpin and Jack Sheppard, who died in their neatest attire, with nosegays in their button-holes, and with the courage that a crowd expects! It was anticipated that the body of Turpin would have been delivered up to the surgeons for dissection, and the people seeing some men very busily employed in removing it, suddenly set upon them, rescued the body, bore it about the town in triumph, and then buried it in a very deep grave, filled with quick-lime, to hasten the progress of decomposition. They would not suffer the corpse of their hero, of the man who had ridden from London to York in four-and-twenty hours to be mangled by the rude hands of unmannerly surgeons.

The death of Claude Duval would appear to

have been no less triumphant. Claude was a gentlemanly thief. According to Butler, in the famous ode to his memory, he

" Taught the wild Arabs of the road
To rob in a more gentle mode;
Take prizes more obligingly than those
Who never had breen bred *filous*;
And how to hang in a more graceful fashion
Than e'er was known before to the dull English nation."

In fact, he was the pink of politeness, and his gallantry to the fair sex was proverbial. When he was caught at last, pent in " stone walls and chains and iron grates," — their grief was in proportion to his rare merits and his great fame. Butler says, that to his dungeon

" —— came ladies from all parts,
To offer up close prisoners their hearts,
Which he received as tribute due—
* * * *
Never did bold knight, to relieve
Distressed dames, such dreadful feats achieve,
As feeble damsels, for his sake,
Would have been proud to undertake,
And, bravely ambitious to redeem
The world's loss and their own,
Strove who should have the honour to lay down,
And change a life with him."

Among the noted thieves of France, there is none to compare with the famous Aimerigot Tête-noire, who flourished in the reign of Charles VI. This fellow was at the head of four or five hundred men, and possessed two very strong castles in Limousin and Auvergne. There was a good deal of

the feudal baron about him, although he possessed no revenues but such as the road afforded him. At his death he left a singular will. "I give and bequeath," said the robber, "one thousand five hundred francs to St. George's Chapel, for such repairs as it may need. To my sweet girl who so tenderly loved me, I give two thousand five hundred; and the surplus I give to my companions. I hope they will all live as brothers, and divide it amicably among them. If they cannot agree, and the devil of contention gets among them, it is no fault of mine; and I advise them to get a good strong, sharp axe, and break open my strong box. Let them scramble for what it contains, and the Devil seize the hindmost." The people of Auvergne still recount with admiration the daring feats of this brigand.

Of later years, the French thieves have been such unmitigated scoundrels as to have left but little room for popular admiration. The famous Cartouche, whose name has become synonymous with ruffian in their language, had none of the generosity, courtesy, and devoted bravery which are so requisite to make a robber-hero. He was born at Paris, towards the end of the seventeenth century, and broken alive on the wheel in November 1727. He was, however, sufficiently popular to have been pitied at his death, and afterwards to have formed the subject of a much admired drama, which bore his name, and was played with great success in all the theatres of France during the years 1734, 5, and 6. In our own day

the French have been more fortunate in a robber; Vidocq bids fair to rival the fame of Turpin and Jack Sheppard. Already he has become the hero of many an apocryphal tale — already his compatriots boast of his manifold achievements, and express their doubts whether any other country in Europe could produce a thief so clever, so accomplished, so gentlemanly, as Vidocq.

Germany has its Schinderhannes, Hungary its Schubry, and Italy and Spain a whole host of brigands, whose names and exploits are familiar as household words in the mouths of the children and populace of those countries.

The Italian banditti are renowned over the world; and many of them are not only very religious (after a fashion), but very charitable. Charity from such a source is so unexpected, that the people dote upon them for it. One of them, when he fell into the hands of the police, exclaimed, as they led him away, "Ho fatto più carità!"—"I have given away more in charity than any three convents in these provinces." And the fellow spoke truth.

In Lombardy, the people cherish the memory of two notorious robbers, who flourished about two centuries ago under the Spanish government. Their story, according to Macfarlane, is contained in a little book well known to all the children of the province, and read by them with much more gusto than their Bibles.

Schinderhannes, the robber of the Rhine, is a great favourite on the banks of the river which

he so long kept in awe. Many amusing stories are related by the peasantry of the scurvy tricks he played off upon rich Jews, or too-presuming officers of justice — of his princely generosity, and undaunted courage. In short, they are proud of him, and would no more consent to have the memory of his achievements dissociated from their river than they would to have the rock of Ehrenbreitstein blown to atoms by gunpowder.

There is another robber-hero, of whose character and exploits the people of Germany speak admiringly. Mausch Nadel was captain of a considerable band that infested the Rhine, Switzerland, Alsatia, and Lorraine during the years 1824, 5, and 6. Like Jack Sheppard, he endeared himself to the populace by his most hazardous escape from prison. Being confined, at Bremen, in a dungeon, on the third story of the prison of that town, he contrived to let himself down without exciting the vigilance of the sentinels, and to swim across the Weser, though heavily laden with irons. When about half way over, he was espied by a sentinel, who fired at him, and shot him in the calf of the leg: but the undaunted robber struck out manfully, reached the shore, and was out of sight before the officers of justice could get ready their boats to follow him. He was captured again in 1826, tried at Mayence, and sentenced to death. He was a tall, strong, handsome man, and his fate, villain as he was, excited much sympathy all over Germany. The ladies especially were loud in their regret that nothing could be done to save a hero so good-look-

ing, and of adventures so romantic, from the knife of the headsman.

Mr. Macfarlane, in speaking of Italian banditti, remarks, that the abuses of the Catholic religion, with its confessions and absolutions, have tended to promote crime of this description. But, he adds, more truly, that priests and monks have not done half the mischief which has been perpetrated by ballad-mongers and story-tellers. If he had said play-wrights also, the list would have been complete. In fact, the theatre, which can only expect to prosper, in a pecuniary sense, by pandering to the tastes of the people, continually recurs to the annals of thieves and banditti for its most favourite heroes. These theatrical robbers, with their picturesque attire, wild haunts, jolly, reckless, devil-may-care manners, take a wonderful hold upon the imagination, and, whatever their advocates may say to the contrary, exercise a very pernicious influence upon public morals. In the Memoirs of the Duke of Guise upon the Revolution of Naples in 1647 and 1648, it is stated, that the manners, dress, and mode of life of the Neapolitan banditti were rendered so captivating upon the stage, that the authorities found it absolutely necessary to forbid the representation of dramas in which they figured, and even to prohibit their costume at the masquerades. So numerous were the banditti at this time, that the Duke found no difficulty in raising an army of them, to aid him in his endeavours to seize on the throne of Naples. He thus describes them ;*

* See also " Foreign Quarterly Review," vol. iv. p. 398.

"They were three thousand five hundred men, of whom the oldest came short of five and forty years, and the youngest was above twenty. They were all tall and well made, with long black hair, for the most part curled, coats of black Spanish leather, with sleeves of velvet, or cloth of gold, cloth breeches with gold lace, most of them scarlet; girdles of velvet, laced with gold, with two pistols on each side; a cutlass hanging at a belt, suitably trimmed, three fingers broad and two feet long; a hawking-bag at their girdle, and a powder-flask hung about their neck with a great silk riband. Some of them carried firelocks, and others blunder-busses; they had all good shoes, with silk stockings, and every one a cap of cloth of gold, or cloth of silver, of different colours, on his head, which was very delightful to the eye."

"The Beggars' Opera," in our own country, is another instance of the admiration that thieves excite upon the stage. Of the extraordinary success of this piece, when first produced, the following account is given in the notes to "The Dunciad," and quoted by Johnson in his "Lives of the Poets." "This piece was received with greater applause than was ever known. Besides being acted in London sixty-three days without interruption, and renewed the next season with equal applause, it spread into all the great towns of England; was played in many places to the thirtieth and fortieth time; at Bath and Bristol, &c. fifty. It made its progress into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was performed twenty-four days successively.

The ladies carried about with them the favourite songs of it in fans, and houses were furnished with it in screens. The fame of it was not confined to the author only. The person who acted Polly, till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town;* her pictures were engraved and sold in great numbers; her life written, books of letters and verses to her published, and pamphlets made even of her sayings and jests. Furthermore, it drove out of England, for that season, the Italian Opera, which had carried all before it for ten years." Dr. Johnson, in his Life of the Author, says, that Herring, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, censured the opera, as giving encouragement, not only to vice, but to crimes, by making the highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished; and adds, that it was even said, that after the exhibition the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied. The Doctor doubts the assertion, giving as his reason that highwaymen and housebreakers seldom frequent the playhouse, and that it was not possible for any one to imagine that he might rob with safety, because he saw Macheath reprieved upon the stage. But if Johnson had wished to be convinced, he might very easily have discovered that highwaymen and housebreakers did frequent the theatre, and that nothing was more probable than that a laughable representation of successful villany should induce the young and the already vicious to imitate it. Besides, there is the weighty authority of Sir John Fielding, the chief

* Lavinia Fenton, afterwards Duchess of Bolton.

magistrate of Bow Street, who asserted positively, and proved his assertion by the records of his office, that the number of thieves was greatly increased at the time when that opera was so popular.

We have another instance of the same result much nearer our own times. Schiller's "Raüber," that wonderful play, written by a green youth, perverted the taste and imagination of all the young men in Germany. An accomplished critic of our own country (Hazlitt), speaking of this play, says it was the first he ever read, and such was the effect it produced on him, that "it stunned him, like a blow." After the lapse of five-and-twenty years he could not forget it; it was still, to use his own words, "an old dweller in the chambers of his brain," and he had not even then recovered enough from it, to describe how it was. The high-minded, metaphysical thief, its hero, was so warmly admired, that several raw students, longing to imitate a character they thought so noble, actually abandoned their homes and their colleges, and betook themselves to the forests and wilds to levy contributions upon travellers. They thought they would, like Moor, plunder the rich, and deliver eloquent soliloquies to the setting sun or the rising moon; relieve the poor when they met them, and drink flasks of Rhenish with their free companions in rugged mountain passes, or in tents in the thicknesses of the forests. But a little experience wonderfully cooled their courage; they found that real, every-day robbers were very unlike the conventional banditti of the stage, and that three months in prison, with bread and water for

their fare, and damp straw to lie upon, was very well to read about by their own fire sides, but not very agreeable to undergo in their own proper persons.

Lord Byron, with his soliloquising, high-souled thieves, has, in a slight degree, perverted the taste of the greenhorns and incipient rhymesters of his country. As yet, however, they have shown more good sense than their fellows of Germany, and have not taken to the woods or the high-ways. Much as they admire Conrad the Corsair, they will not go to sea, and hoist the black flag in emulation of him. By words only, and not by deeds, they testify their admiration, and deluge the periodicals and music shops of the land with verses describing pirates' and bandits' brides, and robber adventures of every kind.

But it is the play-wright who does most harm; and Byron has fewer sins of this nature to answer for than Gay or Schiller, and the modern dramatizers of Jack Sheppard. With the aid of scenery, fine dresses, and music, and the very false notions they convey, they vitiate the public taste, not knowing,

"—— vulgaires rimeurs!
Quelle force ont les arts pour demolir les mœurs."

In the penny theatres that abound in the poor and populous districts of London, and which are chiefly frequented by striplings of idle and dissolute habits, tales of thieves and murderers are more admired, and draw more crowded audiences, than any other species of representation. There the footpad, the burglar, and the highwayman are portrayed in unnatural colours, and give pleasant lessons in crime to their delighted listeners.

There the deepest tragedy and the broadest farce are represented in the career of the murderer and the thief, and are applauded in proportion to their depth and their breadth. There, whenever a crime of unusual atrocity is committed, it is brought out afresh, with all its disgusting incidents copied from the life, for the amusement of those who will one day become its imitators.

With the mere reader the case is widely different; and most people have a partiality for knowing the adventures of noted rogues. Even in fiction they are delightful: witness the eventful story of Gil Blas de Santillane, and of that great rascal Don Guzman d'Alfarache. Here there is no fear of imitation. Poets, too, without doing mischief, may sing of such heroes when they please, wakening our sympathies for the sad fate of Gilderoy, or Macpherson the Dauntless; or celebrating in undying verse the wrongs and the revenge of the great thief of Scotland, Rob Roy. If, by the music of their sweet rhymes, they can convince the world that such heroes are but mistaken philosophers, born a few ages too late, and having both a theoretical and practical love for

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> That they should keep who can,"

the world may, perhaps, become wiser, and consent to some better distribution of its good things, by means of which thieves may become reconciled to the age, and the age to them. The probability, however, seems to be, that the charmers will charm in vain, charm they ever so wisely.

INFLUENCE OF POLITICS AND RELIGION

ON THE

HAIR AND BEARD.

> Speak with respect and honour
> Both of the beard and the beard's owner.
>
> HUDIBRAS.

THE famous declaration of St. Paul, "that long hair was a shame unto a man" has been made the pretext for many singular enactments, both of civil and ecclesiastical governments. The fashion of the hair and the cut of the beard were state questions in France and England from the establishment of Christianity until the fifteenth century.

We find, too, that in much earlier times men were not permitted to do as they liked with their own hair. Alexander the Great thought that the beards of his soldiery afforded convenient handles for the enemy to lay hold of, preparatory to cutting off their heads; and, with the view of depriving them of this advantage, he ordered the whole of his army to be closely shaven. His notions of courtesy towards an enemy were quite different from those entertained by the North American Indians,

amongst whom it is held a point of honour to allow one "chivalrous lock" to grow, that the foe, in taking the scalp, may have something to catch hold of.

At one time, long hair was the symbol of sovereignty in Europe. We learn from Gregory of Tours that, among the successors of Clovis, it was the exclusive privilege of the royal family to have their hair long, and curled. The nobles, equal to kings in power, would not show any inferiority in this respect, and wore not only their hair, but their beards, of an enormous length. This fashion lasted, with but slight changes, till the time of Louis the Debonnaire, but his successors, up to Hugh Capet, wore their hair short, by way of distinction. Even the serfs had set all regulation at defiance, and allowed their locks and beards to grow.

At the time of the invasion of England by William the Conqueror, the Normans wore their hair very short. Harold, in his progress towards Hastings, sent forward spies to view the strength and number of the enemy. They reported, amongst other things, on their return, that "the host did almost seem to be priests, because they had all their face and both their lips shaven." The fashion among the English at the time was to wear the hair long upon the head and the upper lip, but to shave the chin. When the haughty victors had divided the broad lands of the Saxon thanes and franklins among them, when tyranny of every kind was em-

ployed to make the English feel that they were indeed a subdued and broken nation, the latter encouraged the growth of their hair, that they might resemble as little as possible their cropped and shaven masters.

This fashion was exceedingly displeasing to the clergy, and prevailed to a considerable extent in France and Germany. Towards the end of the eleventh century, it was decreed by the Pope, and zealously supported by the ecclesiastical authorities all over Europe, that such persons as wore long hair should be excommunicated while living, and not be prayed for when dead. William of Malmesbury relates, that the famous St. Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, was peculiarly indignant whenever he saw a man with long hair. He declaimed against the practice as one highly immoral, criminal, and beastly. He continually carried a small knife in his pocket, and whenever anybody, offending in this respect, knelt before him to receive his blessing, he would whip it out slily, and cut off a handful, and then, throwing it in his face, tell him to cut off all the rest, or he would go to hell.

But fashion, which at times it is possible to move with a wisp, stands firm against a lever; and men preferred to run the risk of damnation to parting with the superfluity of their hair. In the time of Henry I, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, found it necessary to republish the famous decree of excommunication and outlawry against the offend-

ers; but, as the court itself had begun to patronize curls, the fulminations of the church were unavailing. Henry I. and his nobles wore their hair in long ringlets down their backs and shoulders, and became a *scandalum magnatum* in the eyes of the godly. One Serlo, the King's chaplain, was so grieved in spirit at the impiety of his master, that he preached a sermon from the well-known text of St. Paul, before the assembled court, in which he drew so dreadful a picture of the torments that awaited them in the other world, that several of them burst into tears, and wrung their hair, as if they would have pulled it out by the roots. Henry himself was observed to weep. The priest, seeing the impression he had made, determined to strike while the iron was hot, and, pulling a pair of scissors from his pocket, cut the king's hair in presence of them all. Several of the principal courtiers consented to do the like, and, for a short time, long hair appeared to be going out of fashion. But the courtiers thought, after the first glow of their penitence had been cooled by reflection, that the clerical Dalilah had shorn them of their strength, and, in less than six months, they were as great sinners as ever.

Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been a monk of Bec, in Normandy, and who had signalized himself at Rouen by his fierce opposition to long hair, was still anxious to work a reformation in this matter. But his pertinacity was far

from pleasing to the King, who had finally made up his mind to wear ringlets. There were other disputes, of a more serious nature, between them; so that when the Archbishop died, the King was so glad to be rid of him, that he allowed the see to remain vacant for five years. Still the cause had other advocates, and every pulpit in the land resounded with anathemas against that disobedient and long-haired generation. But all was of no avail. Stowe, in writing of this period, asserts, on the authority of some more ancient chronicler, "that men, forgetting their birth, transformed themselves, by the length of their haires, into the semblance of woman kind;" and that when their hair decayed from age, or other causes, "they knit about their heads certain rolls and braidings of false hair." At last accident turned the tide of fashion. A knight of the court, who was exceedingly proud of his beauteous locks, dreamed one night that, as he lay in bed, the devil sprang upon him, and endeavoured to choke him with his own hair. He started in affright, and actually found that he had a great quantity of hair in his mouth. Sorely stricken in conscience, and looking upon the dream as a warning from Heaven, he set about the work of reformation, and cut off his luxuriant tresses the same night. The story was soon bruited abroad; of course it was made the most of by the clergy, and the knight, being a man of influence and consideration, and the acknowledged leader of the

fashion, his example, aided by priestly exhortations, was very generally imitated. Men appeared almost as decent as St. Wulstan himself could have wished, the dream of a dandy having proved more efficacious than the entreaties of a saint. But, as Stowe informs us, "scarcely was one year past, when all that thought themselves courtiers fell into the former vice, and contended with women in their long haires." Henry, the King, appears to have been quite uninfluenced by the dreams of others, for even his own would not induce him a second time to undergo a cropping from priestly shears. It is said, that he was much troubled at this time by disagreeable visions. Having offended the church in this and other respects, he could get no sound refreshing sleep, and used to imagine that he saw all the bishops, abbots, and monks of every degree, standing around his bed-side, and threatening to belabour him with their pastoral staves; which sight, we are told, so frightened him, that he often started naked out of his bed, and attacked the phantoms sword in hand. Grimbalde, his physician, who, like most of his fraternity at that day, was an ecclesiastic, never hinted that his dreams were the result of a bad digestion, but told him to shave his head, be reconciled to the Church, and reform himself with alms and prayer. But he would not take this good advice, and it was not until he had been nearly drowned a year afterwards, in a violent storm at sea, that he repented of his evil

ways, cut his hair short, and paid proper deference to the wishes of the clergy.

In France, the thunders of the Vatican with regard to long curly hair were hardly more respected than in England. Louis VII. however, was more obedient than his brother-king, and cropped himself as closely as a monk, to the great sorrow of all the gallants of his court. His Queen, the gay, haughty, and pleasure-seeking Eleanor of Guienne, never admired him in this trim, and continually reproached him with imitating, not only the headdress, but the asceticism of the monks. From this cause, a coldness arose between them. The lady proving at last unfaithful to her shaven and indifferent lord, they were divorced, and the Kings of France lost the rich provinces of Guienne and Poitou, which were her dowry. She soon after bestowed her hand and her possessions upon Henry Duke of Normandy, afterwards Henry II. of England, and thus gave the English sovereigns that strong footing in France which was for so many centuries the cause of such long and bloody wars between the nations.

When the Crusades had drawn all the smart young fellows into Palestine, the clergy did not find it so difficult to convince the staid burghers who remained in Europe, of the enormity of long hair. During the absence of Richard Cœur de Lion, his English subjects not only cut their hair close, but shaved their faces. William Fitzosbert,

or Long-beard, the great demagogue of that day, reintroduced among the people who claimed to be of Saxon origin the fashion of long hair. He did this with the view of making them as unlike as possible to the citizens and the Normans. He wore his own beard hanging down to his waist, from whence the name by which he is best known to posterity.

The Church never showed itself so great an enemy to the beard as to long hair on the head. It generally allowed fashion to take its own course, both with regard to the chin and the upper lip. This fashion varied continually; for we find that, in little more than a century after the time of Richard I, when beards were short, that they had again become so long as to be mentioned in the famous epigram made by the Scots who visited London in 1327, when David, son of Robert Bruce, was married to Joan, the sister of King Edward. This epigram, which was stuck on the church-door of St. Peter Stangate, ran as follows —

> " Long beards heartlesse,
> Painted hoods witlesse,
> Gray coats gracelesse,
> Make England thriftlesse."

When the Emperor Charles V. ascended the throne of Spain, he had no beard. It was not to be expected that the obsequious parasites who always surround a monarch, could presume to look more virile than their master. Immediately all

the courtiers appeared beardless, with the exception of such few grave old men as had outgrown the influence of fashion, and who had determined to die bearded as they had lived. Sober people in general saw this revolution with sorrow and alarm, and thought that every manly virtue would be banished with the beard. It became at the time a common saying,—

"Desde que no hay barba, no hay mas alma."
We have no longer souls since we have lost our beards.

In France, also, the beard fell into disrepute after the death of Henry IV, from the mere reason that his successor was too young to have one. Some of the more immediate friends of the great Béarnais, and his minister Sully among the rest, refused to part with their beards, notwithstanding the jeers of the new generation.

Who does not remember the division of England into the two great parties of Roundheads and Cavaliers? In those days, every species of vice and iniquity was thought by the Puritans to lurk in the long curly tresses of the Monarchists, while the latter imagined that their opponents were as destitute of wit, of wisdom, and of virtue, as they were of hair. A man's locks were the symbol of his creed, both in politics and religion. The more abundant the hair, the more scant the faith; and the balder the head, the more sincere the piety.

But among all the instances of the interference

of governments with men's hair, the most extraordinary, not only for its daring, but for its success is that of Peter the Great, in 1705. By this time, fashion had condemned the beard in every other country in Europe, and with a voice more potent than Popes or Emperors, had banished it from civilized society. But this only made the Russians cling more fondly to their ancient ornament, as a mark to distinguish them from foreigners, whom they hated. Peter, however resolved that they should be shaven. If he had been a man deeply read in history, he might have hesitated before he attempted so despotic an attack upon the time-hallowed customs and prejudices of his countrymen; but he was not. He did not know or consider the danger of the innovation; he only listened to the promptings of his own indomitable will, and his fiat went forth, that not only the army, but all ranks of citizens, from the nobles to the serfs, should shave their beards. A certain time was given, that people might get over the first throes of their repugnance, after which every man who chose to retain his beard was to pay a tax of one hundred roubles. The priests and the serfs were put on a lower footing, and allowed to retain theirs upon payment of a copeck every time they passed the gate of a city. Great discontent existed in consequence, but the dreadful fate of the Strelitzes was too recent to be forgotten, and thousands who had the will had not the courage to

revolt. As is well remarked by a writer in the "Encyclopedia Britannica," they thought it wiser to cut off their beards than to run the risk of incensing a man who would make no scruple in cutting off their heads. Wiser, too, than the popes and bishops of a former age, he did not threaten them with eternal damnation, but made them pay in hard cash the penalty of their disobedience. For many years, a very considerable revenue was collected from this source. The collectors gave in receipt for its payment a small copper coin, struck expressly for the purpose, and called the "*borodováia*," or "the bearded." On one side it bore the figure of a nose, mouth, and moustachios, with a long bushy beard, surmounted by the words, "*Deuyee Vyeatee*," "money received;" the whole encircled by a wreath, and stamped with the black eagle of Russia. On the reverse, it bore the date of the year. Every man who chose to wear a beard was obliged to produce this receipt on his entry into a town. Those who were refractory, and refused to pay the tax, were thrown into prison.

Since that day, the rulers of modern Europe have endeavoured to persuade, rather than to force, in all matters pertaining to fashion. The Vatican troubles itself no more about beards or ringlets, and men may become hairy as bears, if such is their fancy, without fear of excommunication or deprivation of their political rights. Folly has taken a new start, and cultivates the moustachio.

Even upon this point governments will not let men alone. Religion as yet has not meddled with it; but perhaps it will; and politics already influence it considerably. Before the revolution of 1830, neither the French nor Belgian citizens were remarkable for their moustachios; but, after that event, there was hardly a shopkeeper either in Paris or Brussels whose upper lip did not suddenly become hairy with real or mock moustachios. During a temporary triumph gained by the Dutch soldiers over the citizens of Louvain, in October 1830, it became a standing joke against the patriots, that they shaved their faces clean immediately; and the wits of the Dutch army asserted, that they had gathered moustachios enough from the denuded lips of the Belgians to stuff mattresses for all the sick and wounded in their hospital.

The last folly of this kind is still more recent. In the German newspapers, of August 1838, appeared an ordonnance, signed by the King of Bavaria, forbidding civilians, on any pretence whatever, to wear moustachios, and commanding the police and other authorities to arrest, and cause to be shaved, the offending parties. "Strange to say," adds "Le Droit," the journal from which this account is taken, "moustachios disappeared immediately, like leaves from the trees in autumn; everybody made haste to obey the royal order, and not one person was arrested.

The King of Bavaria, a rhymester of some cele-

brity, has taken a good many poetical licences in his time. His licence in this matter appears neither poetical nor reasonable. It is to be hoped that he will not take it into his royal head to make his subjects shave theirs; nothing but that is wanting to complete their degradation.

DUELS AND ORDEALS.

There was an ancient sage philosopher,
Who swore the world, as he could prove,
Was mad of fighting. * * *

HUDIBRAS.

MOST writers, in accounting for the origin of duelling, derive it from the warlike habits of those barbarous nations who overran Europe in the early centuries of the Christian era, and who knew no mode so effectual for settling their differences as the point of the sword. In fact, duelling, taken in its primitive and broadest sense, means nothing more than combatting, and is the universal resort of all wild animals, including man, to gain or defend their possessions, or avenge their insults. Two dogs who tear each other for a bone, or two bantams fighting on a dunghill for the love of some beautiful hen, or two fools on Wimbledon Common, shooting at each other to satisfy the laws of offended honour, stand on the same footing in this respect, and are, each and all, mere duellists. As civilization advanced, the best informed men naturally grew ashamed of such a mode of adjusting disputes, and the promulgation of some sort

of laws for obtaining redress for injuries was the consequence. Still there were many cases in which the allegations of an accuser could not be rebutted by any positive proof on the part of the accused; and in all these, which must have been exceedingly numerous in the early stages of European society, the combat was resorted to. From its decision there was no appeal. God was supposed to nerve the arm of the combatant whose cause was just, and to grant him the victory over his opponent. As Montesquieu well remarks,* this belief was not unnatural among a people just emerging from barbarism. Their manners being wholly warlike, the man deficient in courage, the prime virtue of his fellows, was not unreasonably suspected of other vices besides cowardice, which is generally found to be co-existent with treachery. He, therefore, who showed himself most valiant in the encounter, was absolved by public opinion from any crime with which he might be charged. As a necessary consequence, society would have been reduced to its original elements, if the men of thought, as distinguished from the men of action, had not devised some means for taming the unruly passions of their fellows. With this view, governments commenced by restricting within the narrowest possible limits the cases in which it was lawful to prove or deny guilt by the single combat. By the law of Gondebaldus, King of the Burgundians,

* "Esprit des Loix," liv. xxviii. chap. xvii.

passed in the year 501, the proof by combat was allowed in all legal proceedings, in lieu of swearing. In the time of Charlemagne, the Burgundian practice had spread over the empire of the Francs, and not only the suitors for justice, but the witnesses, and even the judges, were obliged to defend their cause, their evidence, or their decision, at the point of the sword. Louis the Debonnaire, his successor, endeavoured to remedy the growing evil, by permitting the duel only in appeals of felony, in civil cases, or issue joined in a writ of right, and in cases of the court of chivalry, or attacks upon a man's knighthood. None were exempt from these trials, but women, the sick and the maimed, and persons under fifteen or above sixty years of age. Ecclesiastics were allowed to produce champions in their stead. This practice, in the course of time, extended to all trials of civil and criminal cases, which had to be decided by battle.

The clergy, whose dominion was an intellectual one, never approved of a system of jurisprudence which tended so much to bring all things under the rule of the strongest arm. From the first they set their faces against duelling, and endeavoured, as far as the prejudices of their age would allow them, to curb the warlike spirit, so alien from the principles of religion. In the Council of Valentia, and afterwards in the Council of Trent, they excommunicated all persons engaged in duelling, and not only them, but even the assistants

and spectators, declaring the custom to be hellish and detestable, and introduced by the Devil for the destruction both of body and soul. They added, also, that princes who connived at duels, should be deprived of all temporal power, jurisdiction, and dominion over the places where they had permitted them to be fought. It will be seen hereafter that this clause only encouraged the practice which it was intended to prevent.

But it was the blasphemous error of these early ages to expect that the Almighty, whenever he was called upon, would work a miracle in favour of a person unjustly accused. The priesthood, in condemning the duel, did not condemn the principle on which it was founded. They still encouraged the popular belief of Divine interference in all the disputes or differences that might arise among nations or individuals. It was the very same principle that regulated the ordeals, which, with all their influence, they supported against the duel. By the former, the power of deciding the guilt or innocence was vested wholly in their hands, while, by the latter, they enjoyed no power or privilege at all. It is not to be wondered at, that for this reason, if for no other, they should have endeavoured to settle all differences by the peaceful mode. While that prevailed, they were as they wished to be, the first party in the state; but while the strong arm of individual prowess was allowed to be the judge in all doubtful cases, their power

and influence became secondary to those of the nobility.

Thus, it was not the mere hatred of bloodshed which induced them to launch the thunderbolts of excommunication against the combatants; it was a desire to retain the power, which, to do them justice, they were, in those times, the persons best qualified to wield. The germs of knowledge and civilization lay within the bounds of their order; for they were the representatives of the intellectual, as the nobility were of the physical power of man. To centralize this power in the Church, and make it the judge of the last resort in all appeals, both in civil and criminal cases, they instituted five modes of trial, the management of which lay wholly in their hands. These were the oath upon the Evangelists; the ordeal of the cross, and the fire ordeal, for persons in the higher ranks; the water ordeal, for the humbler classes; and, lastly, the *Corsned*, or bread and cheese ordeal, for members of their own body.

The oath upon the Evangelists was taken in the following manner: the accused who was received to this proof, says Paul Hay, Count du Chastelet, in his Memoirs of Bertrand du Guesclin, swore upon a copy of the New Testament, and on the relics of the holy martyrs, or on their tombs, that he was innocent of the crime imputed to him. He was also obliged to find twelve persons, of acknowledged probity, who should take oath at the same

time, that they believed him innocent. This mode of trial led to very great abuses, especially in cases of disputed inheritance, where the hardest swearer was certain of the victory. This abuse was one of the principal causes which led to the preference given to the trial by battle. It is not all surprising that a feudal baron, or captain of the early ages, should have preferred the chances of a fair fight with his opponent, to a mode by which firm perjury would always be successful.

The trial by, or judgment of, the cross, which Charlemagne begged his sons to have recourse to, in case of disputes arising between them, was performed thus:—When a person accused of any crime had declared his innocence upon oath, and appealed to the cross for its judgment in his favour, he was brought into the church, before the altar. The priests previously prepared two sticks exactly like one another, upon one of which was carved a figure of the cross. They were both wrapped up with great care and many ceremonies, in a quantity of fine wool, and laid upon the altar, or on the relics of the saints. A solemn prayer was then offered up to God, that he would be pleased to discover, by the judgment of his holy cross, whether the accused person were innocent or guilty. A priest then approached the altar, and took up one of the sticks, and the assistants unswathed it reverently. If it was marked with the cross, the accused person was innocent; if unmarked, he was guilty. It would

be unjust to assert, that the judgments thus delivered were, in all cases, erroneous; and it would be absurd to believe that they were left altogether to chance. Many true judgments were doubtless given, and, in all probability, most conscientiously; for we cannot but believe that the priests endeavoured beforehand to convince themselves by secret inquiry and a strict examination of the circumstances, whether the appellant were innocent or guilty, and that they took up the crossed or uncrossed stick accordingly. Although, to all other observers, the sticks, as enfolded in the wool, might appear exactly similar, those who enwrapped them could, without any difficulty, distinguish the one from the other.

By the fire-ordeal the power of deciding was just as unequivocally left in their hands. It was generally believed that fire would not burn the innocent, and the clergy, of course, took care that the innocent, or such as it was their pleasure or interest to declare so, should be so warned before undergoing the ordeal, as to preserve themselves without any difficulty from the fire. One mode of ordeal was to place red-hot ploughshares on the ground at certain distances, and then, blindfolding the accused person, make him walk barefooted over them. If he stepped regularly in the vacant spaces, avoiding the fire, he was adjudged innocent; if he burned himself, he was declared guilty. As none

but the clergy interfered with the arrangement of the ploughshares, they could always calculate beforehand the result of the ordeal. To find a person guilty, they had only to place them at irregular distances, and the accused was sure to tread upon one of them. When Emma, the wife of King Ethelred, and mother of Edward the Confessor, was accused of a guilty familiarity with Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester, she cleared her character in this manner. The reputation, not only of their order, but of a queen, being at stake, a verdict of guilty was not to be apprehended from any ploughshares which priests had the heating of. This ordeal was called the *Judicium Dei*, and sometimes the *Vulgaris Purgatio*, and might also be tried by several other methods. One was to hold in the hand, unhurt, a piece of red-hot iron, of the weight of one, two, or three pounds. When we read not only that men with hard hands, but women of softer and more delicate skin, could do this with impunity, we must be convinced that the hands were previously rubbed with some preservative, or that the apparently hot iron was merely cold iron painted red. Another mode was to plunge the naked arm into a caldron of boiling water. The priests then enveloped it in several folds of linen and flannel, and kept the patient confined within the church, and under their exclusive care, for three days. If, at the end of that time, the arm appeared without a

scar, the innocence of the accused person was firmly established.*

As regards the water-ordeal, the same trouble was not taken. It was a trial only for the poor and humble, and, whether they sank or swam, was thought of very little consequence. Like the witches of more modern times, the accused were thrown into a pond or river; if they sank, and were

* Very similar to this is the fire-ordeal of the modern Hindoos, which is thus described in Forbes's "Oriental Memoirs," vol. i. c. xi.—"When a man, accused of a capital crime, chooses to undergo the ordeal trial, he is closely confined for several days; his right hand and arm are covered with thick wax-cloth, tied up and sealed, in the presence of proper officers, to prevent deceit. In the English districts the covering was always sealed with the Company's arms, and the prisoner placed under an European guard. At the time fixed for the ordeal, a caldron of oil is placed over a fire; when it boils, a piece of money is dropped into the vessel; the prisoner's arm is unsealed, and washed in the presence of his judges and accusers. During this part of the ceremony, the attendant Brahmins supplicate the Deity. On receiving their benediction, the accused plunges his hand into the boiling fluid, and takes out the coin. The arm is afterwards again sealed up until the time appointed for a re-examination. The seal is then broken: if no blemish appears, the prisoner is declared innocent; if the contrary, he suffers the punishment due to his crime." * * * * On this trial the accused thus addresses the element before plunging his hand into the boiling oil:—"Thou, O fire! pervadest all things. O cause of purity! who givest evidence of virtue and of sin, declare the truth in this my hand!" If no juggling were practised, the decisions by this ordeal would be all the same way; but, as some are by this means declared guilty, and others innocent, it is clear that the Brahmins, like the Christian priests of the middle ages, practise some deception in saving those whom they wish to be thought guiltless.

drowned, their surviving friends had the consolation of knowing that they were innocent; if they swam, they were guilty. In either case society was rid of them.

But of all the ordeals, that which the clergy reserved for themselves was the one least likely to cause any member of their corps to be declared guilty. The most culpable monster in existence came off clear when tried by this method. It was called the *Corsned,* and was thus performed. A piece of barley bread and a piece of cheese were laid upon the altar, and the accused priest, in his full canonicals, and surrounded by all the pompous adjuncts of Roman ceremony, pronounced certain conjurations, and prayed with great fervency for several minutes. The burden of his prayer was, that if he were guilty of the crime laid to his charge, God would send his angel Gabriel to stop his throat, that he might not be able to swallow the bread and cheese. There is no instance upon record of a priest having been choked in this manner.*

* An ordeal very like this is still practised in India. Consecrated rice is the article chosen, instead of bread and cheese. Instances are not rare in which, through the force of imagination, guilty persons are not able to swallow a single grain. Conscious of their crime, and fearful of the punishment of Heaven, they feel a suffocating sensation in their throat when they attempt it, and they fall on their knees, and confess all that is laid to their charge. The same thing, no doubt, would have happened with the bread and cheese of the Roman church, if it had been applied to any others but ecclesiastics. The latter had too much wisdom to be caught in a trap of their own setting.

When, under Pope Gregory VII, it was debated whether the Gregorian chant should be introduced into Castile, instead of the Musarabic, given by St. Isidore, of Seville, to the churches of that kingdom, very much ill feeling was excited. The churches refused to receive the novelty, and it was proposed that the affair should be decided by a battle between two champions, one chosen from each side. The clergy would not consent to a mode of settlement which they considered impious, but had no objection to try the merits of each chant by the fire ordeal. A great fire was accordingly made, and a book of the Gregorian and one of the Musarabic chant were thrown into it, that the flames might decide which was most agreeable to God by refusing to burn it. Cardinal Baronius, who says he was an eye-witness of the miracle, relates, that the book of the Gregorian chant was no sooner laid upon the fire, than it leaped out uninjured, visibly, and with a great noise. Every one present thought that the saints had decided in favour of Pope Gregory. After a slight interval, the fire was extinguished; but, wonderful to relate! the other book of St. Isidore was found covered with ashes, but not injured in the slightest degree. The flames had not even warmed it. Upon this it was resolved, that both were alike agreeable to God, and that they should be used by turns in all the churches of Seville.*

* Histoire de Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, par Paul Hay du Chastelet. Livre i. chap. xix.

If the ordeals had been confined to questions like this, the laity would have had little or no objection to them; but when they were introduced as decisive in all the disputes that might arise between man and man, the opposition of all those whose prime virtue was personal bravery, was necessarily excited. In fact, the nobility, from a very early period, began to look with jealous eyes upon them. They were not slow to perceive their true purport, which was no other than to make the Church the last court of appeal in all cases, both civil and criminal: and not only did the nobility prefer the ancient mode of single combat from this cause, in itself a sufficient one, but they clung to it because an acquittal gained by those displays of courage and address which the battle afforded, was more creditable in the eyes of their compeers, than one which it required but little or none of either to accomplish. To these causes may be added another, which was, perhaps, more potent than either, in raising the credit of the judicial combat at the expense of the ordeal. The noble institution of chivalry was beginning to take root, and, notwithstanding the clamours of the clergy, war was made the sole business of life, and the only elegant pursuit of the aristocracy. The fine spirit of honour was introduced, any attack upon which was only to be avenged in the lists, within sight of applauding crowds, whose verdict of approbation was far more gratifying than the cold and formal acquittal of the

ordeal. Lothaire, the son of Louis I, abolished that by fire and the trial of the cross within his dominions; but in England they were allowed so late as the time of Henry III, in the early part of whose reign they were prohibited by an order of council. In the mean time, the Crusades had brought the institution of chivalry to the full height of perfection. The chivalric spirit soon achieved the downfall of the ordeal system, and established the judicial combat on a basis too firm to be shaken. It is true that with the fall of chivalry, as an institution, fell the tournament, and the encounter in the lists; but the duel, their offspring, has survived to this day, defying the efforts of sages and philosophers to eradicate it. Among all the errors bequeathed to us by a barbarous age, it has proved the most pertinacious. It has put variance between men's reason and their honour; put the man of sense on a level with the fool, and made thousands who condemn it submit to it, or practise it.

Those who are curious to see the manner in which these combats were regulated, may consult the learned Montesquieu, where they will find a copious summary of the code of ancient duelling.* Truly does he remark, in speaking of the clearness and excellence of the arrangements, that, as there were many wise matters which were conducted in a very foolish manner, so there were many foolish matters conducted very wisely. No greater exem-

* "Esprit des Loix," livre xxviii. chap. xxv.

plification of it could be given, than the wise and religious rules of the absurd and blasphemous trial by battle.

In the ages that intervened between the Crusades and the new era that was opened out by the invention of gunpowder and printing, a more rational system of legislation took root. The inhabitants of cities, engaged in the pursuits of trade and industry, were content to acquiesce in the decisions of their judges and magistrates whenever any differences arose among them. Unlike the class above them, their habits and manners did not lead them to seek the battle-field on every slight occasion. A dispute as to the price of a sack of corn, a bale of broad-cloth, or a cow, could be more satisfactorily adjusted before the mayor or bailiff of their district. Even the martial knights and nobles, quarrelsome as they were, began to see that the trial by battle would lose its dignity and splendour if too frequently resorted to. Governments also shared this opinion, and on several occasions restricted the cases in which it was legal to proceed to this extremity. In France, before the time of Louis IX, duels were permitted only in cases of *Lèse Majesty*, *Rape*, *Incendiarism*, *Assassination*, and *Burglary*. Louis IX, by taking off all restriction, made them legal in civil cases. This was not found to work well, and, in 1303, Philip the Fair judged it necessary to confine them, in criminal matters, to state offences, rape, and incendiarism; and in civil

cases, to questions of disputed inheritance. Knighthood was allowed to be the best judge of its own honour, and might defend or avenge it as often as occasion arose.

Among the earliest duels upon record, is a very singular one that took place in the reign of Louis II. (A.D. 878). Ingelgerius, Count of Gastinois, was one morning discovered by his Countess dead in bed at her side. Gontran, a relation of the Count, accused the Countess of having murdered her husband, to whom, he asserted, she had long been unfaithful, and challenged her to produce a champion to do battle in her behalf, that he might establish her guilt by killing him.* All the friends and relatives of the Countess believed in her innocence; but Gontran was so stout and bold and renowned a warrior, that no one dared to meet him, for which, as Brantôme quaintly says, "Mauvais et poltrons parens estaient." The unhappy Countess began to despair, when a champion suddenly appeared in the person of Ingelgerius, Count of Anjou, a boy of sixteen years of age, who had been held by the Countess on the baptismal font, and received her husband's name. He tenderly loved his godmother, and offered to do battle in her cause against any and every opponent. The King endeavoured to persuade the generous boy from his enterprise, urging the great strength, tried skill, and invincible courage of the challenger; but he

* Mémoires de Brantôme touchant les Duels.

persisted in his resolution, to the great sorrow of all the court, who said it was a cruel thing to permit so brave and beautiful a child to rush to such butchery and death.

When the lists were prepared, the Countess duly acknowledged her champion, and the combatants commenced the onset. Gontran rode so fiercely at his antagonist, and hit him on the shield with such impetuosity, that he lost his own balance and rolled to the ground. The young Count, as Gontran fell, passed his lance through his body, and then dismounting, cut off his head, which, Brantôme says, "he presented to the King, who received it most graciously, and was very joyful, as much so as if any one had made him a present of a city." The innocence of the Countess was then proclaimed with great rejoicings; and she kissed her godson, and wept over his neck with joy, in the presence of all the assembly.

When the Earl of Essex was accused, by Robert de Montfort, before King Henry II, in 1162, of having traitorously suffered the royal standard of England to fall from his hands in a skirmish with the Welsh, at Coleshill, five years previously, the latter offered to prove the truth of the charge by single combat. The Earl of Essex accepted the challenge, and the lists were prepared near Reading. An immense concourse of persons assembled to witness the battle. Essex at first fought stoutly, but, losing his temper and self-command, he gave an

advantage to his opponent, which soon decided the struggle. He was unhorsed, and so severely wounded, that all present thought he was dead. At the solicitation of his relatives, the monks of the Abbey of Reading were allowed to remove the body for interment, and Montfort was declared the victor. Essex, however, was not dead, but stunned only, and, under the care of the monks, recovered in a few weeks from his bodily injuries. The wounds of his mind were not so easily healed. Though a loyal and brave subject, the whole realm believed him a traitor and a coward because he had been vanquished. He could not brook to return to the world deprived of the good opinion of his fellows; he, therefore, made himself a monk, and passed the remainder of his days within the walls of the Abbey.

Du Chastelet relates a singular duel that was proposed in Spain.* A Christian gentleman of Seville sent a challenge to a Moorish cavalier, offering to prove against him, with whatever weapons he might choose, that the religion of Jesus Christ was holy and divine, and that of Mahomet impious and damnable. The Spanish prelates did not choose that Christianity should be compromised within their jurisdiction by the result of any such combat, and they commanded the knight, under pain of excommunication, to withdraw the challenge.

* Histoire de Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, livre i. chap. xix.

The same author relates, that under Otho I. a question arose among jurisconsults, viz. whether grandchildren, who had lost their father, should share equally with their uncles in the property of their grandfather, at the death of the latter. The difficulty of this question was found so insurmountable, that none of the lawyers of that day could resolve it. It was at last decreed, that it should be decided by single combat. Two champions were accordingly chosen; one for, and the other against, the claims of the little ones. After a long struggle, the champion of the uncles was unhorsed and slain; and it was, therefore, decided, that the right of the grandchildren was established, and that they should enjoy the same portion of their grandfather's possessions that their father would have done had he been alive.

Upon pretexts, just as frivolous as these, duels continued to be fought in most of the countries of Europe during the whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A memorable instance of the slightness of the pretext on which a man could be forced to fight a duel to the death, occurs in the Memoirs of the brave Constable, Du Guesclin. The advantage he had obtained, in a skirmish before Rennes, against William Brembre, an English captain, so preyed on the spirits of William Troussel, the chosen friend and companion of the latter, that nothing would satisfy him but a mortal combat with the Constable. The Duke of Lancaster, to

whom Troussel applied for permission to fight the great Frenchman, forbade the battle, as not warranted by the circumstances. Troussel nevertheless burned with a fierce desire to cross his weapon with Du Guesclin, and sought every occasion to pick a quarrel with him. Having so good a will for it, of course he found a way. A relative of his had been taken prisoner by the Constable, in whose hands he remained till he was able to pay his ransom. Troussel resolved to make a quarrel out of this, and despatched a messenger to Du Guesclin, demanding the release of his prisoner, and offering a bond, at a distant date, for the payment of the ransom. Du Guesclin, who had received intimation of the hostile purposes of the Englishman, sent back word, that he would not accept his bond, neither would he release his prisoner, until the full amount of his ransom was paid. As soon as this answer was received, Troussel sent a challenge to the Constable, demanding reparation for the injury he had done his honour, by refusing his bond, and offering a mortal combat, to be fought three strokes with the lance, three with the sword, and three with the dagger. Du Guesclin, although ill in bed with the ague, accepted the challenge, and gave notice to the Marshal d'Andreghem, the King's Lieutenant-General in Lower Normandy, that he might fix the day and the place of combat. The Marshal made all necessary arrangements, upon condition that he who was beaten should pay a

hundred florins of gold to feast the nobles and gentlemen who were witnesses of the encounter.

The Duke of Lancaster was very angry with his captain, and told him, that it would be a shame to his knighthood and his nation, if he forced on a combat with the brave Du Guesclin, at a time when he was enfeebled by disease and stretched on the couch of suffering. Upon these representations, Troussel, ashamed of himself, sent notice to Du Guesclin that he was willing to postpone the duel until such time as he should be perfectly recovered. Du Guesclin replied, that he could not think of postponing the combat, after all the nobility had received notice of it; that he had sufficient strength left, not only to meet, but to conquer such an opponent as he was; and that, if he did not make his appearance in the lists at the time appointed, he would publish him everywhere as a man unworthy to be called a knight, or to wear an honourable sword by his side. Troussel carried this haughty message to the Duke of Lancaster, who immediately gave permission for the battle.

On the day appointed, the two combatants appeared in the lists, in the presence of several thousand spectators. Du Guesclin was attended by the flower of the French nobility, including the Marshal de Beaumanoir, Olivier de Mauny, Bertrand de Saint Pern, and the Viscount de la Bellière, while the Englishman appeared with no more than the customary retinue of two seconds, two squires,

two coutilliers, or daggermen, and two trumpeters. The first onset was unfavourable to the Constable: he received so heavy a blow on his shield-arm, that he fell forward to the left, upon his horse's neck, and, being weakened by his fever, was nearly thrown to the ground. All his friends thought he could never recover himself, and began to deplore his ill fortune; but Du Guesclin collected his energies for a decisive effort, and, at the second charge, aimed a blow at the shoulder of his enemy, which felled him to the earth, mortally wounded. He then sprang from his horse, sword in hand, with the intention of cutting off the head of his fallen foe, when the Marshal D'Andreghem threw a golden wand into the arena, as a signal that hostilities should cease. Du Guesclin was proclaimed the victor, amid the joyous acclamations of the crowd, and retiring, left the field to the meaner combatants, who were afterwards to make sport for the people. Four English and as many French squires fought for some time with pointless lances, when the French, gaining the advantage, the sports were declared at an end.

In the time of Charles VI, about the beginning of the fifteenth century, a famous duel was ordered by the Parliament of Paris. The Sieur de Carrouges being absent in the Holy Land, his lady was violated by the Sieur Legris. Carrouges, on his return, challenged Legris to mortal combat, for the twofold crime of violation and slander, inasmuch as he had denied his guilt, by asserting that

the lady was a willing party. The lady's asseverations of innocence were held to be no evidence by the Parliament, and the duel was commanded with all the ceremonies. "On the day appointed," says Brantôme,* "the lady came to witness the spectacle in her chariot; but the King made her descend, judging her unworthy, because she was criminal in his eyes till her innocence was proved, and caused her to stand upon a scaffold to await the mercy of God and this judgment by the battle. After a short struggle, the Sieur de Carrouges overthrew his enemy, and made him confess both the rape and the slander. He was then taken to the gallows and hanged in the presence of the multitude; while the innocence of the lady was proclaimed by the heralds, and recognized by her husband, the King, and all the spectators."

Numerous battles, of a similar description, constantly took place, until the unfortunate issue of one encounter of the kind led the French King, Henry II, to declare solemnly, that he would never again permit any such encounter, whether it related to a civil or criminal case, or the honour of a gentleman.

This memorable combat was fought in the year 1547. François de Vivonne, Lord of La Chataigneraie, and Guy de Chabot, Lord of Jarnac, had been friends from their early youth, and were noted at the court of Francis I. for the gallantry of

* Mémoires de Brantôme touchant les Duels.

their bearing and the magnificence of their retinue. Chataigneraie, who knew that his friend's means were not very ample, asked him one day, in confidence, how it was that he contrived to be so well provided? Jarnac replied, that his father had married a young and beautiful woman, who, loving the son far better than the sire, supplied him with as much money as he desired. La Chataigneraie betrayed the base secret to the Dauphin, the Dauphin to the King, the King to his courtiers, and the courtiers to all their acquaintance. In a short time it reached the ears of the old Lord de Jarnac, who immediately sent for his son, and demanded to know in what manner the report had originated, and whether he had been vile enough not only to carry on such a connexion, but to boast of it? De Jarnac indignantly denied that he had ever said so, or given reason to the world to say so, and requested his father to accompany him to court, and confront him with his accuser, that he might see the manner in which he would confound him. They went accordingly, and the younger De Jarnac, entering a room where the Dauphin, La Chataigneraie, and several courtiers were present, exclaimed aloud, "That whoever had asserted, that he maintained a criminal connexion with his mother-in-law, was a liar and a coward!" Every eye was turned to the Dauphin and La Chataigneraie, when the latter stood forward, and asserted, that De Jarnac had himself avowed that such was the

fact, and he would extort from his lips another confession of it. A case like this could not be met or rebutted by any legal proof, and the royal council ordered that it should be decided by single combat. The King, however, set his face against the duel,* and forbade them both, under pain of his high displeasure, to proceed any further in the matter. But Francis died in the following year, and the Dauphin, now Henry II, who was himself compromised, resolved that the combat should take place.

The lists were prepared in the court-yard of the chateau of St. Germain-en-Laye, and the 10th of July 1547 was appointed for the encounter. The cartels of the combatants, which are preserved in the "Mémoires de Castelnau," were as follow:—

"Cartel of François de Vivonne, Lord of La Chataigneraie.

"SIRE,

"HAVING learned that Guy Chabot de Jarnac, being lately at Compeigne, asserted, that whoever had said that he boasted of having criminal intercourse with his mother-in-law, was wicked and a

* Although Francis showed himself in this case an enemy to duelling, yet, in his own case, he had not the same objection. Every reader of history must remember his answer to the challenge of the Emperor Charles V. The Emperor wrote that he had failed in his word, and that he would sustain their quarrel single-handed against him. Francis replied, that he lied—*qu'il en avait menti par la gorge*, and that he was ready to meet him in single combat whenever and wherever he pleased.

wretch,—I, Sire, with your good-will and pleasure, do answer, that he has wickedly lied, and will lie as many times as he denies having said that which I affirm he did say; for I repeat, that he told me several times, and boasted of it, that he had slept with his mother-in-law.

"FRANCOIS DE VIVONNE."

To this cartel De Jarnac replied:—

"SIRE,

"WITH your good will and permission, I say, that François de Vivonne has lied in the imputation which he has cast upon me, and of which I spoke to you at Compeigne. I, therefore, entreat you, Sire, most humbly, that you be pleased to grant us a fair field, that we may fight this battle to the death.

"GUY CHABOT."

The preparations were conducted on a scale of the greatest magnificence, the King having intimated his intention of being present. La Chataigneraie made sure of the victory, and invited the King and a hundred and fifty of the principal personages of the court to sup with him in the evening, after the battle, in a splendid tent, which he had prepared at the extremity of the lists. De Jarnac was not so confident, though perhaps more desperate. At noon, on the day appointed, the combatants met, and each took the customary oath,

that he bore no charms or amulets about him, or made use of any magic, to aid him against his antagonist. They then attacked each other, sword in hand. La Chataigneraie was a strong, robust man, and over confident; De Jarnac was nimble, supple, and prepared for the worst. The combat lasted for some time doubtful, until De Jarnac, overpowered by the heavy blows of his opponent, covered his head with his shield, and, stooping down, endeavoured to make amends by his agility for his deficiency of strength. In this crouching posture he aimed two blows at the left thigh of La Chataigneraie, who had left it uncovered, that the motion of his leg might not be impeded. Each blow was successful, and, amid the astonishment of all the spectators, and to the great regret of the King, La Chataigneraie rolled over upon the sand. He seized his dagger, and made a last effort to strike De Jarnac; but he was unable to support himself, and fell powerless into the arms of the assistants. The officers now interfered, and De Jarnac being declared the victor, fell down upon his knees, uncovered his head, and, clasping his hands together, exclaimed:—"*O Domine, non sum dignus!*" La Chataigneraie was so mortified by the result of the encounter, that he resolutely refused to have his wounds dressed. He tore off the bandages which the surgeons applied, and expired two days afterwards. Ever since that time, any sly and unforeseen attack has been called

by the French a *coup de Jarnac*. Henry was so grieved at the loss of his favourite, that he made the solemn oath already alluded to, that he would never again, so long as he lived, permit a duel. Some writers have asserted, and among others, Mezeraie, that he issued a royal edict forbidding them. This has been doubted by others, and, as there appears no registry of the edict in any of the courts, it seems most probable that it was never issued. This opinion is strengthened by the fact, that two years afterwards, the council ordered another duel to be fought, with similar forms, but with less magnificence, on account of the inferior rank of the combatants. It is not anywhere stated, that Henry interfered to prevent it, notwithstanding his solemn oath; but that, on the contrary, he encouraged it, and appointed the Marshal de la Marque to see that it was conducted according to the rules of chivalry. The disputants were Fendille and D'Aguerre, two gentlemen of the household, who, quarrelling in the King's chamber, had proceeded from words to blows. The council, being informed of the matter, decreed that it could only be decided in the lists. Marshal de la Marque, with the King's permission, appointed the city of Sedan as the place of combat. Fendille, who was a bad swordsman, was anxious to avoid an encounter with D'Aguerre, who was one of the most expert men of the age; but the council authoritatively commanded that he should fight, or be

degraded from all his honours. D'Aguerre appeared in the field attended by François de Vendôme, Count de Chartres, while Fendille was accompanied by the Duke de Nevers. Fendille appears to have been not only an inexpert swordsman, but a thorough coward; one who, like Cowley, might have heaped curses on the man,

> "——— (Death's factor sure), who brought
> Dire swords into this peaceful world."

On the very first encounter he was thrown from his horse, and, confessing on the ground all that his victor required of him, slunk away ignominiously from the arena.

One is tempted to look upon the death of Henry II. as a judgment upon him for his perjury in the matter of duelling. In a grand tournament instituted on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter, he broke several lances in encounters with some of the bravest knights of the time. Ambitious of still further renown, he would not rest satisfied until he had also engaged the young Count de Montgomeri. He received a wound in the eye from the lance of this antagonist, and died from its effects shortly afterwards, in the forty-first year of his age.

In the succeeding reigns of Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III, the practice of duelling increased to an alarming extent. Duels were not rare in the other countries of Europe at the same period; but in France they were so frequent, that historians,

in speaking of that age, designate it as "l'époque de la fureur des duels." The Parliament of Paris endeavoured, as far as in its power lay, to discourage the practice. By a decree dated the 26th of June 1559, it declared all persons who should be present at duels, or aiding and abetting in them, to be rebels to the King, transgressors of the law, and disturbers of the public peace.

When Henry III. was assassinated at St. Cloud, in 1589, a young gentleman, named L'isle Marivaut, who had been much beloved by him, took his death so much to heart, that he resolved not to survive him. Not thinking suicide an honourable death, and wishing, as he said, to die gloriously in revenging his King and master, he publicly expressed his readiness to fight anybody to the death who should assert that Henry's assassination was not a great misfortune to the community. Another youth, of a fiery temper and tried courage, named Marolles, took him at his word, and the day and place of the combat were forthwith appointed. When the hour had come, and all were ready, Marolles turned to his second, and asked whether his opponent had a casque or helmet only, or whether he wore a *sallade*, or headpiece. Being answered a helmet only, he said gaily, "So much the better; for, sir, my second, you shall repute me the wickedest man in all the world, if I do not thrust my lance right through the the middle of his head and kill him." Truth to say, he did so at the very first onset, and the un-

happy L'isle Marivaut expired without a groan. Brantôme, who relates this story, adds, that the victor might have done as he pleased with the body, cut off the head, dragged it out of the camp, or exposed it upon an ass, but that, being a wise and very courteous gentleman, he left it to the relatives of the deceased to be honourably buried, contenting himself with the glory of his triumph, by which he gained no little renown and honour among the ladies of Paris.

On the accession of Henry IV. that monarch pretended to set his face against duelling; but such was the influence of early education and the prejudices of society upon him, that he never could find it in his heart to punish a man for this offence. He thought it tended to foster a warlike spirit among his people. When the chivalrous Crequi demanded his permission to fight Don Philippe de Savoire, he is reported to have said, "Go, and if I were not a King, I would be your second." It is no wonder that when such were known to be the King's disposition, his edicts attracted but small attention. A calculation was made by M. de Lomenie, in the year 1607, that since the accession of Henry, in 1589, no less than four thousand French gentlemen had lost their lives in these conflicts, which, for the eighteen years, would have been at the rate of four or five in a week, or eighteen per month! Sully, who reports this fact in his Memoirs, does not throw the slightest doubt upon its exactness, and

adds, that it was chiefly owing to the facility and ill-advised good-nature of his royal master that the bad example had so empoisoned the court, the city, and the whole country. This wise minister devoted much of his time and attention to the subject; for the rage, he says, was such as to cause him a thousand pangs, and the King also. There was hardly a man moving in what was called good society, who had not been engaged in a duel either as principal or second; and if there were such a man, his chief desire was to free himself from the imputation of non-duelling, by picking a quarrel with somebody. Sully constantly wrote letters to the King, in which he prayed him to renew the edicts against this barbarous custom, to aggravate the punishment against offenders, and never, in any instance, to grant a pardon, even to a person who had wounded another in a duel, much less to any one who had taken away life. He also advised, that some sort of tribunal, or court of honour, should be established, to take cognizance of injurious and slanderous language, and of all such matters as usually led to duels; and that the justice to be administered by this court should be sufficiently prompt and severe to appease the complainant, and make the offender repent of his aggression.

Henry, being so warmly pressed by his friend and minister, called together an extraordinary council in the gallery of the palace of Fontainebleau, to take the matter into consideration. When all

the members were assembled, his Majesty requested that some person conversant with the subject would make a report to him on the origin, progress, and different forms of the duel. Sully complacently remarks, that none of the counsellors gave the King any great reason to felicitate them on their erudition. In fact, they all remained silent. Sully held his peace with the rest; but he looked so knowing, that the King turned towards him, and said:—"Great master! by your face I conjecture that you know more of this matter than you would have us believe. I pray you, and indeed I command, that you tell us what you think and what you know." The coy minister refused, as he says, out of mere politeness to his more ignorant colleagues; but, being again pressed by the King, he entered into a history of duelling both in ancient and modern times. He has not preserved this history in his Memoirs; and, as none of the ministers or counsellors present thought proper to do so, the world is deprived of a discourse which was, no doubt, a learned and remarkable one. The result was, that a royal edict was issued, which Sully lost no time in transmitting to the most distant provinces, with a distinct notification to all parties concerned that the King was in earnest, and would exert the full rigour of the law in punishment of the offenders. Sully himself does not inform us what were the provisions of the new law; but Father Matthias has been more explicit,

and from him we learn, that the Marshals of France were created judges of a court of chivalry, for the hearing of all causes wherein the honour of a noble or gentleman was concerned, and that such as resorted to duelling should be punished by death and confiscation of property, and that the seconds and assistants should lose their rank, dignity, or offices, and be banished from the court of their sovereign.*

But so strong a hold had the education and prejudice of his age upon the mind of the King, that though his reason condemned, his sympathies approved the duel. Notwithstanding this threatened severity, the number of duels did not diminish, and the wise Sully had still to lament the prevalence of an evil which menaced society with utter disorganization. In the succeeding reign the practice prevailed, if possible, to a still greater extent, until the Cardinal de Richelieu, better able to grapple with it than Sully had been, made some severe examples in the very highest classes. Lord Herbert, the English ambassador at the court of Louis XIII. repeats, in his letters, an observation that had been previously made in the reign of Henry IV, that it was rare to find a Frenchman moving in good society who had not killed his man in a duel. The Abbé Millot says of this period, that the duel madness made the most terrible ravages. Men had actually a frenzy for combatting. Caprice and

* Le Père Matthias, tome ii. livre iv.

vanity, as well as the excitement of passion, imposed the necessity of fighting. Friends were obliged to enter into the quarrels of their friends, or be themselves called out for their refusal, and revenge became hereditary in many families. It was reckoned that in twenty years eight thousand letters of pardon had been issued to persons who had killed others in single combat.*

Other writers confirm this statement. Amelot de Houssaye, in his Memoirs, says, upon this subject, that duels were so common in the first years of the reign of Louis XIII, that the ordinary conversation of persons when they met in the morning was, "*Do you know who fought yesterday?*" and after dinner, "*Do you know who fought this morning?*" The most infamous duellist at that period was De Bouteville. It was not at all necessary to quarrel with this assassin to be forced to fight a duel with him. When he heard that any one was very brave, he would go to him, and say, "*People tell me that you are brave; you and I must fight together!*" Every morning the most notorious bravos and duellists used to assemble at his house, to take a breakfast of bread and wine, and practise fencing. M. de Valençay, who was afterwards elevated to the rank of a cardinal, ranked very high in the estimation of De Bouteville and his gang. Hardly a day passed but what he was engaged in some duel or other, either as principal

* "Elemens de l'Histoire de France, vol. iii. p. 219.

or second; and he once challenged De Bouteville himself, his best friend, because De Bouteville had fought a duel without inviting him to become his second. This quarrel was only appeased on the promise of De Bouteville that, in his next encounter, he would not fail to avail himself of his services. For that purpose he went out the same day, and picked a quarrel with the Marquis des Portes. M. de Valençay, according to agreement, had the pleasure of serving as his second, and of running through the body M. de Cavois, the second of the Marquis des Portes, a man who had never done him any injury, and whom he afterwards acknowledged he had never seen before.

Cardinal Richelieu devoted much attention to this lamentable state of public morals, and seems to have concurred with his great predecessor, Sully, that nothing but the most rigorous severity could put a stop to the evil. The subject indeed was painfully forced upon him by his enemies. The Marquis de Themines, to whom Richelieu, then Bishop of Luçon, had given offence by some representations he had made to Mary of Medicis, determined, since he could not challenge an ecclesiastic, to challenge his brother. An opportunity was soon found. Themines, accosting the Marquis de Richelieu, complained, in an insulting tone, that the Bishop of Luçon had broken his faith. The Marquis resented both the manner and matter of his speech, and readily accepted a chal-

lenge. They met in the Rue d'Angoulême, and the unfortunate Richelieu was stabbed to the heart, and instantly expired. From that moment the Bishop became the steady foe of the practice of duelling. Reason and the impulse of brotherly love alike combined to make him detest it, and when his power in France was firmly established, he set vigorously about repressing it. In his "Testament Politique," he has collected his thoughts upon the subject, in the chapter entitled "Des moyens d'arreter les Duels." In spite of the edicts that he published, the members of the nobility persisted in fighting upon the most trivial and absurd pretences. At last Richelieu made a terrible example. The infamous De Bouteville challenged and fought the Marquis de Beuoron; and, although the duel itself was not fatal to either, its consequences were fatal to both. High as they were, Richelieu resolved that the law should reach them, and they were both tried, found guilty, and beheaded. Thus did society get rid of one of the most bloodthirsty scoundrels that ever polluted it.

In 1632 two noblemen fought a duel, in which they were both killed. The officers of justice had notice of the breach of the law, and arrived at the scene of combat before the friends of the parties had time to remove the bodies. In conformity with the Cardinal's severe code upon the subject, the bodies were ignominiously stripped, and hanged upon a gallows, with their heads downwards, for

several hours, within sight of all the people.* This severity sobered the frenzy of the nation for a time; but it was soon forgotten. Men's minds were too deeply imbued with a false notion of honour to be brought to a right way of thinking: by such examples, however striking, Richelieu was unable to persuade them to walk in the right path, though he could punish them for choosing the wrong one. He had, with all his acuteness, miscalculated the spirit of duelling. It was not death that a duellist feared: it was shame, and the contempt of his fellows. As Addison remarked more than eighty years afterwards, "Death was not sufficient to deter men who made it their glory to despise it; but if every one who fought a duel were to stand in the pillory, it would quickly diminish the number of those imaginary men of honour, and put an end to so absurd a practice." Richelieu never thought of this.

Sully says, that in his time the Germans were also much addicted to duelling. There were three places where it was legal to fight; Witzburg, in Franconia, and Uspach and Halle, in Swabia. Thither, of course, vast numbers repaired, and murdered each other under sanction of the law. At an earlier period, in Germany, it was held highly disgraceful to refuse to fight. Any one who surrendered to his adversary for a simple wound that did not disable him, was reputed infamous, and

* Mercure de France, vol. xiii.

could neither cut his beard, bear arms, mount on horseback, or hold any office in the state. He who fell in a duel was buried with great pomp and splendour.

In the year 1652, just after Louis XIV. had attained his majority, a desperate duel was fought between the Dukes de Beaufort and De Nemours, each attended by four gentlemen. Although brothers-in-law, they had long been enemies, and their constant dissensions had introduced much disorganization among the troops which they severally commanded. Each had long sought an opportunity for combat, which at last arose on a misunderstanding relative to the places they were to occupy at the council board. They fought with pistols, and, at the first discharge, the Duke de Nemours was shot through the body, and almost instantly expired. Upon this the Marquis de Villars, who seconded Nemours, challenged Hericourt, the second of the Duke de Beaufort, a man whom he had never before seen; and the challenge being accepted, they fought even more desperately than their principals. This combat, being with swords, lasted longer than the first, and was more exciting to the six remaining gentlemen who stayed to witness it. The result was fatal to Hericourt, who fell pierced to the heart by the sword of De Villars. Anything more savage than this can hardly be imagined. Voltaire says such duels were frequent, and the compiler of the "Dictionnaire d'Anec-

dotes" informs us, that the number of seconds was not fixed. As many as ten, or twelve, or twenty, were not unfrequent, and they often fought together after their principals were disabled. The highest mark of friendship one man could manifest towards another, was to choose him for his second; and many gentlemen were so desirous of serving in this capacity, that they endeavoured to raise every slight misunderstanding into a quarrel, that they might have the pleasure of being engaged in it. The Count de Bussy Rabutin relates an instance of this in his Memoirs. He says, that as he was one evening coming out of the theatre, a gentleman, named Bruc, whom he had not before known, stopped him very politely, and, drawing him aside, asked him if it was true that the Count de Thianges had called him (Bruc) a drunkard? Bussy replied, that he really did not know, for he saw the Count very seldom. "Oh! he is your uncle!" replied Bruc; "and, as I cannot have satisfaction from him, because he lives so far off in the country, I apply to you." "I see what you are at," replied Bussy, "and, since you wish to put me in my uncle's place, I answer, that whoever asserted that he called you a drunkard, told a lie!" "My brother said so," replied Bruc, "and he is a child." "Horsewhip him, then, for his falsehood," returned De Bussy. "I will not have my brother called a liar," returned Bruc, determined to quarrel with him; "so draw, and defend yourself!" They both

drew their swords in the public street, but were separated by the spectators. They agreed, however, to fight on a future occasion, and with all the regular forms of the duello. A few days afterwards, a gentleman, whom De Bussy had never before seen, and whom he did not know, even by name, called upon him, and asked if he might have the privilege of serving as his second. He added, that he neither knew him nor Bruc, except by reputation, but, having made up his mind to be second to one of them, he had decided upon accompanying De Bussy as the braver man of the two. De Bussy thanked him very sincerely for his politeness, but begged to be excused, as he had already engaged four seconds to accompany him, and he was afraid that if he took any more, the affair would become a battle instead of a duel.

When such quarrels as these were looked upon as mere matters of course, the state of society must have been indeed awful. Louis XIV. very early saw the evil, and as early determined to remedy it. It was not, however, till the year 1679, when he instituted the "Chambre Ardente," for the trial of the slow poisoners and pretenders to sorcery, that he published any edict against duelling. In that year his famous edict was promulgated, in which he reiterated and confirmed the severe enactments of his predecessors, Henry IV. and Louis XIII, and expressed his determination never to pardon any offender. By this celebrated ordinance

a supreme court of honour was established, composed of the Marshals of France. They were bound, on taking the office, to give to every one who brought a well-founded complaint before them, such reparation as would satisfy the justice of the case. Should any gentleman against whom complaint was made refuse to obey the mandate of the court of honour, he might be punished by fine and imprisonment; and when that was not possible, by reason of his absenting himself from the kingdom, his estates might be confiscated till his return.

Every man who sent a challenge, be the cause of offence what it might, was deprived of all redress from the court of honour—suspended three years from the exercise of any office in the state—was further imprisoned for two years, and sentenced to pay a fine of half his yearly income.

He who accepted a challenge, was subject to the same punishment. Any servant, or other person, who knowingly became the bearer of a challenge, was, if found guilty, sentenced to stand in the pillory and be publicly whipped for the first offence, and for the second, sent for three years to the galleys.

Any person who actually fought, was to be held guilty of murder, even though death did not ensue, and was to be punished accordingly. Persons in the higher ranks of life were to be beheaded, and those of the middle class hanged upon a gallows, and their bodies refused Christian burial.

At the same time that Louis published this severe edict, he exacted a promise from his principal nobility that they would never engage in a duel on any pretence whatever. He never swerved from his resolution to pursue all duellists with the utmost rigour, and many were executed in various parts of the country. A slight abatement of the evil was the consequence, and in the course of a few years one duel was not fought where twelve had been fought previously. A medal was struck to commemorate the circumstance, by the express command of the King. So much had he this object at heart, that, in his will, he particularly recommended to his successor the care of his edict against duelling, and warned him against any ill-judged lenity to those who disobeyed it.

A singular law formerly existed in Malta with regard to duelling. By this law it was permitted, but only upon condition that the parties should fight in one particular street. If they presumed to settle their quarrel elsewhere, they were held guilty of murder, and punished accordingly. What was also very singular, they were bound, under heavy penalties, to put up their swords when requested to do so by a priest, a knight, or a woman. It does not appear, however, that the ladies or the knights exercised this mild and beneficent privilege to any great extent; the former were too often themselves the cause of duels, and the latter sympathised too much in the wounded honour of the combatants to

attempt to separate them. The priests alone were the great peacemakers. Brydone says, that a cross was always painted on the wall opposite to the spot where a knight had been killed, and that in the "street of duels" he counted about twenty of them.*

In England the private duel was also practised to a scandalous extent, towards the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The judicial combat now began to be more rare, but several instances of it are mentioned in history. One was instituted in the reign of Elizabeth, and another so late as the time of Charles I. Sir Henry Spelman gives an account of that which took place in Elizabeth's reign, which is curious, perhaps the more so when we consider that it was perfectly legal, and that similar combats remained so till the year 1819. A proceeding having been instituted in the Court of Common Pleas for the recovery of certain manorial rights in the county of Kent, the defendant offered to prove by single combat his right to retain possession. The plaintiff accepted the challenge, and the Court having no power to stay the proceedings, agreed to the champions who were to fight in lieu of the principals. The Queen commanded the parties to compromise; but it being represented to Her Majesty that they were justified by law in the course they were pursuing, she allowed them to proceed.

* Brydone's "Tour in Malta." 1772.

On the day appointed, the Justices of the Common Pleas, and all the council engaged in the cause, appeared as umpires of the combat, at a place in Tothill-fields, where the lists had been prepared. The champions were ready for the encounter, and the plaintiff and defendant were publicly called to come forward and acknowledge them. The defendant answered to his name, and recognised his champion with the due formalities, but the plaintiff did not appear. Without his presence and authority the combat could not take place; and his absence being considered an abandonment of his claim, he was declared to be nonsuited, and barred for ever from renewing his suit before any other tribunal whatever.

The Queen appears to have disapproved personally of this mode of settling a disputed claim, but her judges and legal advisers made no attempt to alter the barbarous law. The practice of private duelling excited more indignation, from its being of every-day occurrence. In the time of James I. the English were so infected with the French madness, that Bacon, when he was Attorney-general, lent the aid of his powerful eloquence to effect a reformation of the evil. Informations were exhibited in the Star Chamber against two persons, named Priest and Wright, for being engaged, as principal and second, in a duel, on which occasion he delivered a charge that was so highly approved of by the Lords of the Council, that they

ordered it to be printed and circulated over the country, as a thing "very meet and worthy to be remembered and made known unto the world." He began by considering the nature and greatness of the mischief of duelling. "It troubleth peace—it disfurnisheth war—it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the state, and contempt upon the law. Touching the causes of it," he observed, "that the first motive of it, no doubt, is a false and erroneous imagination of honour and credit; but then, the seed of this mischief being such, it is nourished by vain discourses and green and unripe conceits. Hereunto may be added, that men have almost lost the true notion and understanding of fortitude and valour. For fortitude distinguisheth of the grounds of quarrel whether they be just; and not only so, but whether they be worthy, and setteth a better price upon men's lives than to bestow them idly. Nay, it is weakness and disesteem of a man's self to put a man's life upon such liedger performances. A man's life is not to be trifled with: it is to be offered up and sacrificed to honourable services, public merits, good causes, and noble adventures. It is in expense of blood as it is in expense of money. It is no liberality to make a profusion of money upon every vain occasion, neither is it fortitude to make effusion of blood, except the cause of it be worth."*

* See "Life and Character of Lord Bacon," by Thomas Martin, Barrister-at-law.

The most remarkable event connected with duelling in this reign was that between Lord Sanquir, a Scotch nobleman, and one Turner, a fencing-master. In a trial of skill between them, his lordship's eye was accidentally thrust out by the point of Turner's sword. Turner expressed great regret at the circumstance, and Lord Sanquir bore his loss with as much philosophy as he was master of, and forgave his antagonist. Three years afterwards, Lord Sanquir was at Paris, where he was a constant visitor at the court of Henry IV. One day, in the course of conversation, the affable monarch inquired how he had lost his eye. Sanquir, who prided himself on being the most expert swordsman of the age, blushed as he replied that it was inflicted by the sword of a fencing-master. Henry, forgetting his assumed character of an anti-duellist, carelessly, and as a mere matter of course, inquired whether the man lived? Nothing more was said, but the query sank deep into the proud heart of the Scotch baron, who returned shortly afterwards to England, burning for revenge. His first intent was to challenge the fencing-master to single combat, but, on further consideration, he deemed it inconsistent with his dignity to meet him as an equal in fair and open fight. He therefore hired two bravos, who set upon the fencing-master, and murdered him in his own house at Whitefriars. The assassins were taken and executed, and a reward of one thousand pounds offered

for the apprehension of their employer. Lord Sanquir concealed himself for several days, and then surrendered to take his trial, in the hope (happily false) that Justice would belie her name, and be lenient to a murderer because he was a nobleman, who, on a false point of honour, had thought fit to take revenge into his own hands. The most powerful intercessions were employed in his favour, but James, to his credit, was deaf to them all. Bacon, in his character of Attorney-general, prosecuted the prisoner to conviction; and he died the felon's death, on the 29th of June, 1612, on a gibbet erected in front of the gate of Westminster Hall.

With regard to the public duel, or trial by battle, demanded under the sanction of the law, to terminate a quarrel which the ordinary course of justice could with difficulty decide, Bacon was equally opposed to it, and thought that in no case should it be granted. He suggested that there should be declared a constant and settled resolution in the state to abolish it altogether; that care should be taken that the evil be no more cockered, nor the humour of it fed, but that all persons found guilty should be rigorously punished by the Star Chamber, and those of eminent quality banished from the court.

In the succeeding reign, when Donald Mackay, the first Lord Reay, accused David Ramsay of treason, in being concerned with the Marquis of Hamil-

ton in a design upon the crown of Scotland, he was challenged by the latter to make good his assertion by single combat.* It had been at first the intention of the government to try the case by the common law, but Ramsay thought he would stand a better chance of escape by recurring to the old and almost exploded custom, but which was still the right of every man in appeals of treason. Lord Reay readily accepted the challenge, and both were confined in the Tower until they found security that they would appear on a certain day, appointed by the court, to determine the question. The management of the affair was delegated to the Marischal Court of Westminster, and the Earl of Lindsay was created Lord Constable of England for the purpose. Shortly before the day appointed, Ramsay confessed in substance all that Lord Reay had laid to his charge, upon which Charles I. put a stop to the proceedings.

But in England, about this period, sterner disputes arose among men than those mere individual matters which generate duels. The men of the Commonwealth encouraged no practice of the kind, and the subdued aristocracy carried their habits and prejudices elsewhere, and fought their duels at foreign courts. Cromwell's Parliament, however,—although the evil at that time was not so crying,—published an order, in 1654, for the prevention of duels, and the punishment of all con-

* See "History of the House and Clan of Mackay."

cerned in them. Charles II, on his restoration, also issued a proclamation upon the subject. In his reign an infamous duel was fought — infamous, not only from its own circumstances, but from the lenity that was shown to the principal offenders.

The worthless Duke of Buckingham, having debauched the Countess of Shrewsbury, was challenged by her husband to mortal combat, in January 1668. Charles II. endeavoured to prevent the duel, not from any regard to public morality, but from fear for the life of his favourite. He gave commands to the Duke of Albemarle to confine Buckingham to his house, or take some other measures to prevent him from fighting. Albemarle neglected the order, thinking that the King himself might prevent the combat by some surer means. The meeting took place at Barn Elms, the injured Shrewsbury being attended by Sir John Talbot, his relative, and Lord Bernard Howard, son of the Earl of Arundel. Buckingham was accompanied by two of his dependants, Captain Holmes and Sir John Jenkins. According to the barbarous custom of the age, not only the principals, but the seconds, engaged each other. Jenkins was pierced to the heart, and left dead upon the field, and Sir John Talbot severely wounded in both arms. Buckingham himself escaping with slight wounds, ran his unfortunate antagonist through the body, and then left the field with the

wretched woman, the cause of all the mischief, who, in the dress of a page, awaited the issue of the conflict in a neighbouring wood, holding her paramour's horse to avoid suspicion. Great influence was exerted to save the guilty parties from punishment, and the master, as base as the favourite, made little difficulty in granting a free pardon to all concerned. In a royal proclamation issued shortly afterwards, Charles II. formally pardoned the murderers, but declared his intention never to extend, in future, any mercy to such offenders. It would be hard after this to say who was the most infamous, the King, the favourite, or the courtezan.

In the reign of Queen Anne, repeated complaints were made of the prevalence of duelling. Addison, Swift, Steele, and other writers, employed their powerful pens in reprobation of it. Steele especially, in the "Tatler" and "Guardian," exposed its impiety and absurdity, and endeavoured, both by argument and by ridicule, to bring his countrymen to a right way of thinking.* His comedy of "The Conscious Lovers" contains an admirable exposure of the abuse of the word *honour*, which led men into an error so lamentable. Swift, writing upon the subject, remarked that he could see no harm in rogues and fools shooting each other. Addison and Steele took higher ground,

* See "Spectator," Nos. 84. 97, and 99; and "Tatler," Nos. 25, 26. 29. 31. 38, and 39; and "Guardian," No. 20.

and the latter, in the "Guardian," summed up nearly all that could be said upon the subject in the following impressive words: — "A Christian and a gentleman are made inconsistent appellations of the same person. You are not to expect eternal life if you do not forgive injuries, and your mortal life is rendered uncomfortable if you are not ready to commit a murder in resentment of an affront; for good sense, as well as religion, is so utterly banished the world that men glory in their very passions, and pursue trifles with the utmost vengeance, so little do they know that to forgive is the most arduous pitch human nature can arrive at. A coward has often fought — a coward has often conquered, but a coward never forgave." Steele also published a pamphlet, in which he gave a detailed account of the edict of Louis XIV, and the measures taken by that monarch to cure his subjects of their murderous folly.

On the 8th of May, 1711, Sir Cholmely Deering, M. P. for the county of Kent, was slain in a duel by Mr. Richard Thornhill, also a member of the House of Commons. Three days afterwards, Sir Peter King brought the subject under the notice of the Legislature, and after dwelling at considerable length on the alarming increase of the practice, obtained leave to bring in a bill for the prevention and punishment of duelling. It was read a first time that day, and ordered for a second reading in the ensuing week.

About the same time the attention of the Upper House of Parliament was also drawn to the subject in the most painful manner. Two of its most noted members would have fought, had it not been that Queen Anne received notice of their intention, and exacted a pledge that they would desist; while a few months afterwards, two other of its members lost their lives in one of the most remarkable duels upon record. The first affair, which happily terminated without a meeting, was between the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl Pawlet. The latter, and fatal encounter, was between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun.

The first arose out of a debate in the Lords upon the conduct of the Duke of Ormond, in refusing to hazard a general engagement with the enemy, in which Earl Pawlet remarked that nobody could doubt the courage of the Duke of Ormond. "He was not like a certain general, who led troops to the slaughter, to cause great numbers of officers to be knocked on the head in a battle, or against stone walls, in order to fill his pockets by disposing of their commissions." Every one felt that the remark was aimed at the Duke of Marlborough, but he remained silent, though evidently suffering in mind. Soon after the House broke up, the Earl Pawlet received a visit from Lord Mohun, who told him that the Duke of Marlborough was anxious to come to an explanation with him relative to some expressions he had made use

of in that day's debate, and therefore prayed him to "go and take a little air in the country." Earl Pawlet did not affect to misunderstand the hint, but asked him in plain terms whether he brought a challenge from the Duke. Lord Mohun said his message needed no explanation, and that he (Lord Mohun) would accompany the Duke of Marlborough. He then took his leave, and Earl Pawlet returned home and told his lady that he was going out to fight a duel with the Duke of Marlborough. His lady, alarmed for her lord's safety, gave notice of his intention to the Earl of Dartmouth, who immediately, in the Queen's name, sent to the Duke of Marlborough, and commanded him not to stir abroad. He also caused Earl Pawlet's house to be guarded by two sentinels; and having taken these precautions, informed the Queen of the whole affair. Her Majesty sent at once for the Duke, expressed her abhorrence of the custom of duelling, and required his word of honour that he would proceed no further. The Duke pledged his word accordingly, and the affair terminated.

The lamentable duel between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun took place in November 1712, and sprang from the following circumstances. A lawsuit had been pending for eleven years between these two noblemen, and they looked upon each other in consequence with a certain degree of coldness. They met together on the 13th of November in the chambers of Mr. Orlebar, a Mas-

ter in Chancery, when, in the course of conversation, the Duke of Hamilton reflected upon the conduct of one of the witnesses in the cause, saying that he was a person who had neither truth nor justice in him. Lord Mohun, somewhat nettled at this remark, applied to a witness favourable to his side, made answer hastily, that Mr. Whiteworth, the person alluded to, had quite as much truth and justice in him as the Duke of Hamilton. The Duke made no reply, and no one present imagined that he took offence at what was said; and when he went out of the room, he made a low and courteous salute to the Lord Mohun. In the evening, General Macartney called twice upon the Duke with a challenge from Lord Mohun, and failing in seeing him, sought him a third time at a tavern, where he found him, and delivered his message. The Duke accepted the challenge, and the day after the morrow, which was Sunday, the 15th of November, at seven in the morning, was appointed for the meeting.

At that hour they assembled in Hyde Park, the Duke being attended by his relative, Colonel Hamilton, and the Lord Mohun by General Macartney. They jumped over a ditch into a place called the Nursery, and prepared for the combat. The Duke of Hamilton, turning to General Macartney, said, "*Sir, you are the cause of this, let the event be what it will.*" Lord Mohun did not wish that the seconds should engage, but the Duke insisted that

"*Macartney should have a share in the dance.*" All being ready, the two principals took up their positions, and fought with swords so desperately that, after a short time, they both fell down, mortally wounded. The Lord Mohun expired upon the spot, and the Duke of Hamilton in the arms of his servants as they were carrying him to his coach.

This unhappy termination caused the greatest excitement, not only in the metropolis, but all over the country. The Tories, grieved at the loss of the Duke of Hamilton, charged the fatal combat on the Whig party, whose leader, the Duke of Marlborough, had so recently set the example of political duels. They called Lord Mohun the bully of the Whig faction, (he had already killed three men in duels, and been twice tried for murder), and asserted openly, that the quarrel was concocted between him and General Macartney to rob the country of the services of the Duke of Hamilton by murdering him. It was also asserted, that the wound of which the Duke died was not inflicted by Lord Mohun, but by Macartney; and every means was used to propagate this belief. Colonel Hamilton, against whom and Macartney the coroner's jury had returned a verdict of wilful murder, surrendered a few days afterwards, and was examined before a privy council sitting at the house of Lord Dartmouth. He then deposed, that seeing Lord Mohun fall, and the Duke upon him, he ran to the Duke's assistance, and that he might with the more

ease help him, he flung down both their swords, and, as he was raising the Duke up, *he saw Macartney make a push at him.* Upon this deposition a royal proclamation was immediately issued, offering a reward of 500*l.* for the apprehension of Macartney, to which the Duchess of Hamilton afterwards added a reward of 300*l.*

Upon the further examination of Colonel Hamilton, it was found that reliance could not be placed on all his statements, and that he contradicted himself in several important particulars. He was arraigned at the Old Bailey for the murder of Lord Mohun, the whole political circles of London being in a fever of excitement for the result. All the Tory party prayed for his acquittal, and a Tory mob surrounded the doors and all the avenues leading to the court of justice for many hours before the trial began. The examination of witnesses lasted seven hours. The criminal still persisted in accusing General Macartney of the murder of the Duke of Hamilton, but, in other respects, say the newspapers of the day, prevaricated foully. He was found guilty of manslaughter. This favourable verdict was received with universal applause, "not only from the court and all the gentlemen present, but the common people showed a mighty satisfaction, which they testified by loud and repeated huzzas."*

As the popular delirium subsided, and men began

* "Post Boy," December 13th, 1712.

to reason coolly upon the subject, they disbelieved the assertions of Colonel Hamilton, that Macartney had stabbed the Duke, although it was universally admitted that he had been much too busy and presuming. Hamilton was shunned by all his former companions, and his life rendered so irksome to him, that he sold out of the Guards, and retired to private life, in which he died heart-broken four years afterwards.

General Macartney surrendered about the same time, and was tried for murder in the Court of King's Bench. He was, however, found guilty of manslaughter only.

At the opening of the session of Parliament of 1713, the Queen made pointed allusion in her speech to the frequency of duelling, and recommended to the Legislature to devise some speedy and effectual remedy for it. A bill to that effect was brought forward, but thrown out on the second reading, to the very great regret of all the sensible portion of the community.

A famous duel was fought in 1765 between Lord Byron and Mr. Chaworth. The dispute arose at a club-dinner, and was relative to which of the two had the largest quantity of game on his estates. Infuriated by wine and passion, they retired instantly into an adjoining room, and fought with swords across a table, by the feeble glimmer of a tallow-candle. Mr. Chaworth, who was the more expert swordsman of the two, received a mortal

wound, and shortly afterwards expired. Lord Byron was brought to trial for the murder before the House of Lords; and it appearing clearly, that the duel was not premeditated, but fought at once, and in the heat of passion, he was found guilty of manslaughter only, and ordered to be discharged upon payment of his fees. This was a very bad example for the country, and duelling of course fell into no disrepute after such a verdict.

In France, more severity was exercised. In the year 1769, the Parliament of Grenoble took cognizance of the delinquency of the Sieur Duchelas, one of its members, who challenged and killed in a duel a captain of the Flemish legion. The servant of Duchelas officiated as second, and was arraigned with his master for the murder of the captain. They were both found guilty. Duchelas was broken alive on the wheel, and the servant condemned to the galleys for life.

A barbarous and fiercely-contested duel was fought in November 1778, between two foreign adventurers, at Bath, named Count Rice and the Vicomte du Barri. Some dispute arose relative to a gambling transaction, in the course of which Du Barri contradicted an assertion of the other, by saying, "That is not true!" Count Rice immediately asked him if he knew the very disagreeable meaning of the words he had employed. Du Barri said he was perfectly well aware of their meaning, and that Rice might interpret

them just as he pleased. A challenge was immediately given and accepted. Seconds were sent for, who, arriving with but little delay, the whole party, though it was not long after midnight, proceeded to a place called Claverton Down, where they remained with a surgeon until daylight. They then prepared for the encounter, each being armed with two pistols and a sword. The ground having been marked out by the seconds, Du Barri fired first, and wounded his opponent in the thigh. Count Rice then levelled his pistol, and shot Du Barri mortally in the breast. So angry were the combatants, that they refused to desist; both stepped back a few paces, and then rushing forward, discharged their second pistols at each other. Neither shot took effect, and both throwing away their pistols, prepared to finish the sanguinary struggle by the sword. They took their places, and were advancing towards each other, when the Vicomte du Barri suddenly staggered, grew pale, and, falling to the ground, exclaimed, "*Je vous demande ma vie.*" His opponent had but just time to answer, that he granted it, when the unfortunate Du Barri turned upon the grass, and expired with a heavy groan. The survivor of this savage conflict was then removed to his lodgings, where he lay for some weeks in a dangerous state. The coroner's jury, in the mean while, sat upon the body of Du Barri, and disgraced themselves by returning a verdict of manslaughter only. Count Rice, upon

his recovery, was indicted for the murder notwithstanding this verdict. On his trial he entered into a long defence of his conduct, pleading the fairness of the duel, and its unpremeditated nature; and, at the same time, expressing his deep regret for the unfortunate death of Du Barri, with whom for many years he had been bound in ties of the strictest friendship. These considerations appear to have weighed with the jury, and this fierce duellist was again found guilty of manslaughter only, and escaped with a merely nominal punishment.

A duel, less remarkable from its circumstances, but more so from the rank of the parties, took place in 1789. The combatants on this occasion were the Duke of York and Colonel Lenox, the nephew and heir of the Duke of Richmond. The cause of offence was given by the Duke of York, who had said, in presence of several officers of the Guards, that words had been used to Colonel Lenox at Daubigny's to which no gentleman ought to have submitted. Colonel Lenox went up to the Duke on parade, and asked him publicly whether he had made such an assertion. The Duke of York, without answering his question, coldly ordered him to his post. When parade was over, he took an opportunity of saying publicly in the orderly room before Colonel Lenox, that he desired no protection from his rank as a prince and his station as commanding officer; adding that, when

he was off duty, he wore a plain brown coat like a private gentleman, and was ready as such to give satisfaction. Colonel Lenox desired nothing better than satisfaction; that is to say, to run the chance of shooting the Duke through the body, or being himself shot. He accordingly challenged his Royal Highness, and they met on Wimbledon Common. Colonel Lenox fired first, and the ball whizzed past the head of his opponent, so near to it as to graze his projecting curl. The Duke refused to return the fire, and the seconds interfering, the affair terminated.

Colonel Lenox was very shortly afterwards engaged in another duel arising out of this. A Mr. Swift wrote a pamphlet in reference to the dispute between him and the Duke of York, at some expressions in which he took so much offence, as to imagine that nothing but a shot at the writer could atone for them. They met on the Uxbridge Road, but no damage was done to either party.

The Irish were for a long time renowned for their love of duelling. The slightest offence which it is possible to imagine that one man could offer to another, was sufficient to provoke a challenge. Sir Jonah Barrington relates, in his Memoirs, that, previous to the Union, during the time of a disputed election in Dublin, it was no unusual thing for three-and-twenty duels to be fought in a day. Even in times of less excitement, they were so common as to be deemed unworthy of note by the

regular chroniclers of events, except in cases where one or both of the combatants were killed.

In those days, in Ireland, it was not only the man of the military, but of every profession, who had to work his way to eminence with the sword or the pistol. Each political party had its regular corps of bullies, or fire-eaters, as they were called, who qualified themselves for being the pests of society by spending all their spare time in firing at targets. They boasted that they could hit an opponent in any part of his body they pleased, and made up their minds before the encounter began whether they should kill him, disable, or disfigure him for life—lay him on a bed of suffering for a twelvemonth, or merely graze a limb.

The evil had reached an alarming height, when, in the year 1808, an opportunity was afforded to King George III. of showing in a striking manner his detestation of the practice, and of setting an example to the Irish that such murders were not to be committed with impunity. A dispute arose, in the month of June 1807, between Major Campbell and Captain Boyd, officers of the 21st regiment, stationed in Ireland, about the proper manner of giving the word of command on parade. Hot words ensued on this slight occasion, and the result was a challenge from Campbell to Boyd. They retired into the mess-room shortly afterwards, and each stationed himself at a corner, the distance obliquely being but seven paces. Here, without

friends or seconds being present, they fired at each other, and Captain Boyd fell mortally wounded between the fourth and fifth ribs. A surgeon who came in shortly, found him sitting in a chair, vomiting and suffering great agony. He was led into another room, Major Campbell following, in great distress and perturbation of mind. Boyd survived but eighteen hours, and just before his death, said, in reply to a question from his opponent, that the duel was not fair, and added, "You hurried me, Campbell — you're a bad man." — "Good God!" replied Campbell, "will you mention before these gentlemen, was not everything fair? Did you not say that you were ready?" Boyd answered faintly, "Oh, no! you know I wanted you to wait and have friends." On being again asked whether all was fair, the dying man faintly murmured "Yes:" but in a minute after, he said, "You're a bad man!" Campbell was now in great agitation, and wringing his hands convulsively, he exclaimed, "Oh, Boyd! you are the happiest man of the two! Do you forgive me?" Boyd replied, "I forgive you — I feel for you, as I know you do for me." He shortly afterwards expired, and Major Campbell made his escape from Ireland, and lived for some months with his family under an assumed name, in the neighbourhood of Chelsea. He was, however, apprehended, and brought to trial at Armagh, in August 1808. He said while in prison, that, if found guilty of murder, he should

suffer as an example to duellists in Ireland; but he endeavoured to buoy himself up, with the hope that the jury would only convict him of manslaughter. It was proved in evidence upon the trial, that the duel was not fought immediately after the offence was given, but that Major Campbell went home and drank tea with his family, before he sought Boyd for the fatal encounter. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against him, but recommended him to mercy on the ground that the duel had been a fair one. He was condemned to die on the Monday following, but was afterwards respited for a few days longer. In the mean time the greatest exertions were made in his behalf. His unfortunate wife went upon her knees before the Prince of Wales, to move him to use his influence with the King, in favour of her unhappy husband. Everything a fond wife and a courageous woman could do, she tried, to gain the royal clemency; but George III. was inflexible, in consequence of the representations of the Irish Viceroy that an example was necessary. The law was therefore allowed to take its course, and the victim of a false spirit of honour died the death of a felon.

The most inveterate duellists of the present day are the students in the Universities of Germany. They fight on the most frivolous pretences, and settle with swords and pistols the schoolboy disputes which in other countries are arranged by the

more harmless medium of the fisticuffs. It was at one time the custom among these savage youths to prefer the sword combat, for the facility it gave them of cutting off the noses of their opponents. To disfigure them in this manner was an object of ambition, and the German duellists reckoned the number of these disgusting trophies which they had borne away, with as much satisfaction as a successful general the provinces he had reduced or the cities he had taken.

But it would be wearisome to enter into the minute detail of all the duels of modern times. If an examination were made into the general causes which produced them, it would be found that in every case they had been either of the most trivial or the most unworthy nature. Parliamentary duels were at one time very common, and amongst the names of those who have soiled a great reputation by conforming to the practice, may be mentioned those of Warren Hastings, Sir Philip Francis, Wilkes, Pitt, Fox, Grattan, Curran, Tierney, and Canning. So difficult is it even for the superior mind to free itself from the trammels with which foolish opinion has enswathed it — not one of these celebrated persons who did not in his secret soul condemn the folly to which he lent himself. The bonds of reason, though iron-strong, are easily burst through; but those of folly, though lithe and frail as the rushes by a stream, defy the stoutest heart to snap them asunder. Colonel Thomas, an officer of the Guards,

who was killed in a duel, added the following clause to his will the night before he died:—"In the first place, I commit my soul to Almighty God, in hope of his mercy and pardon for the irreligious step I now (in compliance with the unwarrantable customs of this wicked world) put myself under the necessity of taking." How many have been in the same state of mind as this wise, foolish man! He knew his error, and abhorred it, but could not resist it, for fear of the opinion of the prejudiced and unthinking. No other could have blamed him for refusing to fight a duel.

The list of duels that have sprung from the most degrading causes might be stretched out to an almost indefinite extent. Sterne's father fought a duel about a goose; and the great Raleigh about a tavern bill.* Scores of duels (many of them fatal)

* Raleigh, at one period of his life, appeared to be an inveterate duellist, and it was said of him that he had been engaged in more encounters of the kind than any man of note among his contemporaries. More than one fellow-creature he had deprived of life; but he lived long enough to be convinced of the sinfulness of his conduct, and made a solemn vow never to fight another duel. The following anecdote of his forbearance is well known, but it will bear repetition:—

A dispute arose in a coffee-house between him and a young man on some trivial point, and the latter, losing his temper, impertinently spat in the face of the veteran. Sir Walter, instead of running him through the body, as many would have done, or challenging him to mortal combat, coolly took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and said, "Young man, if I could as easily wipe from my conscience the stain of killing you, as I can this spittle from my face, you should not live another minute." The young man immediately begged his pardon.

have been fought from disputes at cards, or a place at a theatre, while hundreds of challenges, given and accepted over-night, in a fit of drunkenness, have been fought out the next morning to the death of one or both of the antagonists.

Two of the most notorious duels of modern times had their origin in causes no more worthy than the quarrel of a dog and the favour of a prostitute: that between Macnamara and Montgomery arising from the former; and that between Best and Lord Camelford, from the latter. The dog of Montgomery attacked a dog belonging to Macnamara, and each master interfering in behalf of his own animal, high words ensued. The result was the giving and accepting a challenge to mortal combat. The parties met on the following day, when Montgomery was shot dead, and his antagonist severely wounded. This affair created a great sensation at the time, and Heaviside, the surgeon who attended at the fatal field to render his assistance, if necessary, was arrested as an accessory to the murder, and committed to Newgate.

In the duel between Best and Lord Camelford, two pistols were used which were considered to be the best in England. One of them was thought slightly superior to the other, and it was agreed that the belligerents should toss up a piece of money to decide the choice of weapons. Best gained it, and, at the first discharge, Lord Camelford fell, mortally wounded. But little sympathy was ex-

pressed for his fate; he was a confirmed duellist, had been engaged in many meetings of the kind, and the blood of more than one fellow-creature lay at his door. As he had sowed, so did he reap; and the violent man met an appropriate death.

It now only remains to notice the means that have been taken to stay the prevalence of this madness of false honour in the various countries of the civilized world. The efforts of the governments of France and England have already been mentioned, and their want of success is but too well known. The same efforts have been attended with the same results elsewhere. In despotic countries, where the will of the monarch has been strongly expressed and vigorously supported, a diminution of the evil has for a while resulted, but only to be increased again, when death relaxed the iron grasp, and a successor appeared of less decided opinions upon the subject. This was the case in Prussia under the great Frederick, of whose aversion to duelling a popular anecdote is recorded. It is stated of him that he permitted duelling in his army, but only upon the condition that the combatants should fight in presence of a whole battalion of infantry, drawn up on purpose, to see fair play. The latter received strict orders, when one of the belligerents fell, to shoot the other immediately. It is added, that the known determination of the King effectually put a stop to the practice.

The Emperor Joseph II. of Austria was as firm as Frederick, although the measures he adopted were not so singular. The following letter explains his views on the subject:—

"To General * * * * *

"My General,

"You will immediately arrest the Count of K. and Captain W. The Count is young, passionate, and influenced by wrong notions of birth and a false spirit of honour. Captain W. is an old soldier, who will adjust every dispute with the sword and pistol, and who has received the challenge of the young Count with unbecoming warmth.

"I will suffer no duelling in my army. I despise the principles of those who attempt to justify the practice, and who would run each other through the body in cold blood.

"When I have officers who bravely expose themselves to every danger in facing the enemy — who at all times exhibit courage, valour, and resolution in attack and defence, I esteem them highly. The coolness with which they meet death on such occasions is serviceable to their country, and at the same time redounds to their own honour; but should there be men amongst them who are ready to sacrifice everything to their vengeance and hatred, I despise them. I consider such a man as no better than a Roman gladiator.

"Order a court-martial to try the two officers. Investigate the subject of their dispute with that impartiality which I demand from every judge; and he that is guilty, let him be a sacrifice to his fate and the laws.

"Such a barbarous custom, which suits the age of the Tamerlanes and Bajazets, and which has often had such melancholy effects on single families, I will have suppressed and punished, even if it should deprive me of one half of my officers. There are still men who know how to unite the character of a hero with that of a good subject; and he only can be so who respects the laws.

"JOSEPH."*

"August 1771."

In the United States of America the code varies considerably. In one or two of the still wild and simple States of the Far West, where no duel has yet been fought, there is no specific law upon the subject beyond that in the Decalogue, which says, "Thou shalt do no murder." But duelling everywhere follows the steps of modern civilization, and by the time the backwoodsman is transformed into the citizen, he has imbibed the false notions of honour which are prevalent in Europe, and around

* Vide the Letters of Joseph II. to distinguished Princes and Statesmen, published for the first time in England in "The Pamphleteer" for 1821. They were originally published in Germany a few years previously, and throw a great light upon the character of that monarch and the events of his reign.

him, and is ready, like his progenitors, to settle his differences with the pistol. In the majority of the States the punishment for challenging, fighting, or acting as second, is solitary imprisonment and hard labour for any period less than a year, and disqualification for serving any public office for twenty years. In Vermont the punishment is total disqualification for office, deprivation of the rights of citizenship, and a fine; in fatal cases, the same punishment as that of murderers. In Rhode Island, the combatant, though death does not ensue, is liable to be carted to the gallows, with a rope about his neck, and to sit in this trim for an hour, exposed to the peltings of the mob. He may be further imprisoned for a year, at the option of the magistrate. In Connecticut the punishment is total disqualification for office or employ, and a fine, varying from one hundred to a thousand dollars. The laws of Illinois require certain officers of the state to make oath, previous to their instalment, that they have never been, nor ever will be, concerned in a duel.*

Amongst the edicts against duelling promulgated at various times in Europe, may be mentioned that of Augustus King of Poland, in 1712, which decreed the punishment of death against principals and seconds, and minor punishments against the bearers of a challenge. An edict was also published at Munich, in 1773, according to which both prin-

* "Encyclopedia Americana," art. Duelling.

cipals and seconds, even in duels where no one was either killed or wounded, should be hanged, and their bodies buried at the foot of the gallows.

The King of Naples issued an ordinance against duelling in 1838, in which the punishment of death is decreed against all concerned in a fatal duel. The bodies of those killed, and of those who may be executed in consequence, are to be buried in unconsecrated ground, and without any religious ceremony; nor is any monument to be erected on the spot. The punishment for duels in which either, or both, are wounded, and for those in which no damage whatever is done, varies according to the case, and consists of fine, imprisonment, loss of rank and honours, and incapacity for filling any public situation. Bearers of challenges may also be punished with fine and imprisonment.

It might be imagined that enactments so severe all over the civilized world would finally eradicate a custom, the prevalence of which every wise and good man must deplore. But the frowns of the law never yet have taught, and never will teach, men to desist from this practice, as long as it is felt that the lawgiver sympathises with it in his heart. The stern judge upon the bench may say to the unfortunate wight who has been called a liar by some unmannerly opponent, "If you challenge him, you meditate murder, and are guilty of mur-

der!" but the same judge, divested of his robes of state, and mixing in the world with other men, would say, "If you do not challenge him, if you do not run the risk of making yourself a murderer, you will be looked upon as a mean-spirited wretch, unfit to associate with your fellows, and deserving nothing but their scorn and their contempt!" It is society, and not the duellist, who is to blame. Female influence, too, which is so powerful in leading men either to good or to evil, takes, in this case, the evil part. Mere animal bravery has, unfortunately, such charms in the female eye, that a successful duellist is but too often regarded as a sort of hero; and the man who refuses to fight, though of truer courage, is thought a poltroon, who may be trampled on. Mr. Graves, a member of the American Legislature, who, early in 1838, killed a Mr. Cilley in a duel, truly and eloquently said, on the floor of the House of Representatives, when lamenting the unfortunate issue of that encounter, that society was more to blame than he was. "Public opinion," said the repentant orator, "is practically the paramount law of the land. Every other law, both human and divine, ceases to be observed; yea, withers and perishes in contact with it. It was this paramount law of this nation, and of this House, that forced me, under the penalty of dishonour, to subject myself to the code, which impelled me unwillingly into this tra-

gical affair. Upon the heads of this nation, and at the doors of this House, rests the blood with which my unfortunate hands have been stained!"

As long as society is in this mood; as long as it thinks that the man who refuses to resent an insult, deserved that insult, and should be scouted accordingly, so long, it is to be feared, will duelling exist, however severe the laws may be. Men must have redress for injuries inflicted, and when those injuries are of such a nature that no tribunal will take cognizance of them, the injured will take the law into their own hands, and right themselves in the opinion of their fellows, at the hazard of their lives. Much as the sage may affect to despise the opinion of the world, there are few who would not rather expose their lives a hundred times than be condemned to live on, in society, but not of it—a by-word of reproach to all who know their history, and a mark for scorn to point his finger at.

The only practicable means for diminishing the force of a custom which is the disgrace of civilization, seems to be the establishment of a court of honour, which should take cognizance of all those delicate and almost intangible offences which yet wound so deeply. The court established by Louis XIV. might be taken as a model. No man now fights a duel when a fit apology has been offered, and it should be the duty of this court to weigh dispassionately the complaint of every man injured

in his honour, either by word or deed, and to force the offender to make a public apology. If he refused the apology, he would be the breaker of a second law; an offender against a high court, as well as against the man he had injured, and might be punished with fine and imprisonment, the latter to last until he saw the error of his conduct, and made the concession which the court demanded.

If, after the establishment of this tribunal, men should be found of a nature so bloodthirsty as not to be satisfied with its peaceful decisions, and should resort to the old and barbarous mode of an appeal to the pistol, some means might be found of dealing with them. To hang them as murderers would be of no avail; for to such men death would have few terrors. Shame alone would bring them to reason. The following code, it is humbly suggested to all future legislators upon the subject, would, in conjunction with the establishment of a court of honour, do much towards eradicating this blot from society. Every man who fought a duel, even though he did not wound his opponent, should be tried, and, upon proof of the fact, be sentenced to have his right hand cut off. The world would then know his true character as long as he lived. If his habits of duelling were so inveterate, and he should learn to fire a pistol with his left hand, he should, upon conviction of a second offence, lose that hand also.

This law, which should allow no commutation of the punishment, under any circumstances, would lend strength and authority to the court of honour. In the course of a few years duelling would be ranked amongst exploded follies, and men would begin to wonder that a custom so barbarous and so impious had ever existed amongst them.

THE LOVE OF THE MARVELLOUS

AND THE

DISBELIEF OF THE TRUE.

"WELL, son John," said the old woman, "and what wonderful things did you meet with all the time you were at sea?"—"Oh! mother," replied John, "I saw many strange things."—"Tell us all about them," replied his mother, "for I long to hear your adventures."—"Well, then," said John, "as we were sailing over the Line, what do you think we saw?"—"I can't imagine," replied his mother.—"Well, we saw a fish rise out of the sea, and fly over our ship!" "Oh! John! John! what a liar you are!" said his mother, shaking her head, and smiling incredulously. "True as death!" said John; "and we saw still more wonderful things than that."—"Let us hear them," said his mother, shaking her head again; "and tell the truth, John, if you can."—"Believe it, or believe it not, as you please," replied her son; "but as we were sailing up the Red Sea, our captain thought he should like some fish for dinner; so he told us to throw

our nets, and catch some."—"Well," inquired his mother, seeing that he paused in his story. "Well," rejoined her son, "we *did* throw them, and, at the very first haul, we brought up a chariot-wheel, made all of gold, and inlaid with diamonds!" "Lord bless us!" said his mother, "and what did the captain say?"—"Why, he said it was one of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot, that had lain in the Red Sea ever since that wicked King was drowned, with all his host, while pursuing the Israelites."—"Well, well," said his mother, lifting up her hands in admiration; "now, that 's very possible, and I think the captain was a very sensible man. Tell me such stories as *that*, and I 'll believe you; but never talk to me of such things as flying fish! No, no, John, such stories won't go down with me, I can assure you!"

Such old women as the sailor's mother, in the above well-known anecdote, are by no means rare in the world. Every age and country has produced them. They have been found in high places, and have sat down among the learned of the earth. Instances must be familiar to every reader in which the same person was willing, with greedy credulity, to swallow the most extravagant fiction, and yet refuse credence to a philosophical fact. The same Greeks who believed readily that Jupiter wooed Leda in the form of a swan, denied stoutly that there were any physical causes for storms and thunder, and treated as impious those

who attempted to account for them on true philosophical principles.

The reasons that thus lead mankind to believe the marvellously false, and to disbelieve the marvellously true, may be easily gathered. Of all the offspring of Time, Error is the most ancient, and is so old and familiar an acquaintance, that Truth, when discovered, comes upon most of us like an intruder, and meets the intruder's welcome. We all pay an involuntary homage to antiquity—a "blind homage," as Bacon calls it in his "Novum Organum," which tends greatly to the obstruction of truth. To the great majority of mortal eyes, Time sanctifies everything that he does not destroy. The mere fact of anything being spared by the great foe makes it a favourite with us, who are sure to fall his victims. To call a prejudice "time-hallowed," is to open a way for it into hearts where it never before penetrated. Some peculiar custom may disgrace the people amongst whom it flourishes; yet men of a little wisdom refuse to aid in its extirpation, merely because it is old. Thus it is with human belief, and thus it is we bring shame upon our own intellect.

To this cause may be added another, also mentioned by Lord Bacon—a misdirected zeal in matters of religion, which induces so many to decry a newly-discovered truth, because the Divine records contain no allusion to it, or because, at first sight, it appears to militate, not against religion, but

against some obscure passage which has never been fairly interpreted. The old woman in the story could not believe that there was such a creature as a flying-fish, because her Bible did not tell her so, but she believed that her son had drawn up the golden and bejewelled wheel from the Red Sea, because her Bible informed her that Pharaoh was drowned there.

Upon a similar principle the monks of the inquisition believed that the devil appeared visibly among men, that St. Anthony pulled his nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, and that the relics of the saints worked miracles; yet they would not believe Galileo, when he proved that the earth turned round the sun.

Keppler, when he asserted the same fact, could gain no bread, and little credence; but when he pretended to tell fortunes and cast nativities, the whole town flocked to him, and paid him enormous fees for his falsehood.

When Roger Bacon invented the telescope and the magic-lantern, no one believed that the unaided ingenuity of man could have done it; but when some wiseacres asserted that the devil had appeared to him, and given him the knowledge which he turned to such account, no one was bold enough to assert that it was improbable. His hint that saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, mixed in certain proportions, would produce effects similar to thunder and lightning, was disregarded or disbelieved; but

the legend of the brazen head which delivered oracles, was credited for many ages.*

Solomon De Cans, who, in the time of Cardinal Richelieu, conceived the idea of a steam-engine, was shut up in the Bastille as a madman, because the idea of such an extraordinary instrument was too preposterous for the wise age that believed in all the abusrdities of witchcraft.

When Harvey first proved the circulation of the blood, every tongue was let loose against him. The thing was too obviously an imposition, and an

* Godwin, in his "Lives of the Necromancers," gives the following version of this legend. Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay entertained the project of enclosing England with a wall, so as to render it inaccessible to any invader. They accordingly raised the devil, as the person best able to inform them how this was to be done. The devil advised them to make a brazen head, with all the internal structure and organs of a human head. The construction would cost them much time, and they must wait with patience till the faculty of speech descended upon it. Finally, however, it would become an oracle, and, if the question were propounded to it, would teach them the solution of their problem. The friars spent seven years in bringing the subject to perfection, and waited day after day in expectation that it would utter articulate sounds. At length nature became exhausted in them, and they lay down to sleep, having first given it strictly in charge to a servant of theirs, clownish in nature, but of strict fidelity, that he should awaken them the moment the image began to speak. That period arrived. The head uttered sounds, but such as the clown judged unworthy of notice. "*Time is!*" it said. No notice was taken, and a long pause ensued. "*Time was!*"—a similar pause, and no notice. "*Time is passed!*" The moment these words were uttered, a tremendous storm ensued, with thunder and lightning, and the head was shivered into a thousand pieces. Thus the experiment of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay came to nothing.

attempt to deceive that public who believed that a king's touch had power to cure the scrofula. That a dead criminal's hand, rubbed against a wen, would cure it, was reasonable enough; but that the blood flowed through the veins was beyond all probability.

In our own day, a similar fate awaited the beneficent discovery of Dr. Jenner. That vaccination could abate the virulence of, or preserve from, the small-pox, was quite incredible; none but a cheat and a quack could assert it: but that the introduction of the vaccine matter into the human frame could endow men with the qualities of a cow, was quite probable. Many of the poorer people actually dreaded that their children would grow hairy and horned as cattle, if they suffered them to be vaccinated.

The Jesuit, Father Labat, the shrewd and learned traveller in South America, relates an experiment which he made upon the credulity of some native Peruvians. Holding a powerful lens in his hand, and concentrating the rays of the sun upon the naked arm of an admiring savage, he soon made him roar with pain. All the tribe looked on, first with wonder, and then with indignation and wonder both combined. In vain the philosopher attempted to explain the cause of the phenomenon —in vain he offered to convince them that there was nothing devilish in the experiment — he was thought to be in league with the infernal gods to

draw down the fire from Heaven, and was looked upon, himself, as an awful and supernatural being. Many attempts were made to gain possession of the lens, with the view of destroying it, and thereby robbing the Western stranger of the means of bringing upon them the vengeance of his deities.

Very similar was the conduct of that inquiring Brahmin, which is related by Forbes in his Oriental Memoirs. The Brahmin had a mind better cultivated than his fellows; he was smitten with a love for the knowledge of Europe — read English books — pored over the pages of the Encyclopedia, and profited by various philosophical instruments; but on religious questions the Brahmin was firm to the faith of his caste and the doctrine of the Metempsychosis. Lest he might sacrilegiously devour his progenitors, he abstained from all animal food; and thinking that he ate nothing which enjoyed life, he supported himself, like his brethren, upon fruits and vegetables. All the knowledge that did not run counter to this belief, he sought after with avidity, and bade fair to become the wisest of his race. In an evil hour, his English friend and instructor exhibited a very powerful solar microscope, by means of which he showed him that every drop of water that he drank teemed with life — that every fruit was like a world, covered with innumerable animalculæ, each of which was fitted by its organization for the sphere in which it moved, and had its wants, and the capability of supply-

ing them as completely as visible animals millions of times its bulk. The English philosopher expected that his Hindoo friend would be enraptured at the vast field of knowledge thus suddenly opened out to him, but he was deceived. The Brahmin from that time became an altered man — thoughtful, gloomy, reserved, and discontented. He applied repeatedly to his friend that he would make him a present of the microscope; but as it was the only one of its kind in India, and the owner set a value upon it for other reasons, he constantly refused the request, but offered him the loan of it for any period he might require. But nothing short of an unconditional gift of the instrument would satisfy the Brahmin, who became at last so importunate that the patience of the Englishman was exhausted, and he gave it him. A gleam of joy shot across the care-worn features of the Hindoo as he clutched it, and bounding with an exulting leap into the garden, he seized a large stone, and dashed the instrument into a thousand pieces. When called upon to explain his extraordinary conduct, he said to his friend, "Oh that I had remained in that happy state of ignorance wherein you first found me! Yet will I confess that, as my knowledge increased, so did my pleasure, until I beheld the last wonders of the microscope; from that moment I have been tormented by doubt and perplexed by mystery: my mind, overwhelmed by chaotic confusion, knows not

where to rest, nor how to extricate itself from such a maze. I am miserable, and must continue to be so, until I enter on another stage of existence. I am a solitary individual among fifty millions of people, all educated in the same belief with myself —all happy in their ignorance! So may they ever remain! I shall keep the secret within my own bosom, where it will corrode my peace and break my rest. But I shall have some satisfaction in knowing that I alone feel those pangs which, had I not destroyed the instrument, might have been extensively communicated, and rendered thousands miserable! Forgive me, my valuable friend! and oh, convey no more implements of knowledge and destruction!"

Many a learned man may smile at the ignorance of the Peruvian and the Hindoo, unconscious that he himself is just as ignorant and as prejudiced. Who does not remember the outcry against the science of geology, which has hardly yet subsided? Its professors were impiously and absurdly accused of designing to "hurl the Creator from his throne." They were charged with sapping the foundations of religion, and of propping atheism by the aid of a pretended science.

The very same principle which leads to the rejection of the true, leads to the encouragement of the false. Thus we may account for the success which has attended great impostors, at times when the truth, though not half so wondrous as

their impositions, has been disregarded as extravagant and preposterous. The man who wishes to cheat the people, must needs found his operations upon some prejudice or belief that already exists. Thus the philosophic pretenders who told fortunes by the stars cured all diseases by one nostrum, and preserved from evil by charms and amulets, ran with the current of popular belief. Errors that were consecrated by time and long familiarity, they heightened and embellished, and succeeded to their hearts' content; but the preacher of truth had a foundation to make as well as a superstructure, a difficulty which did not exist for the preacher of error. Columbus preached a new world, but was met with distrust and incredulity; had he preached with as much zeal and earnestness the discovery of some valley in the old one, where diamonds hung upon the trees, or a herb grew that cured all the ills incidental to humanity, he would have found a warm and hearty welcome—might have sold dried cabbage leaves for his wonderful herb, and made his fortune.

In fact, it will be found in the history of every generation and race of men, that whenever a choice of belief between the "Wondrously False" and the "Wondrously True" is given to ignorance or prejudice, that their choice will be fixed upon the first, for the reason that it is most akin to their own nature. The great majority of mankind, and even of the wisest among us, are still in the condition

of the sailor's mother — believing and disbelieving on the same grounds that she did — protesting against the flying fish, but cherishing the golden wheels. Thousands there are amongst us, who, rather than pin their faith in the one fish, would believe not only in the wheel of gold, but the chariot — not only in the chariot, but in the horses and the driver.

POPULAR FOLLIES IN GREAT CITIES.

La faridondaine—la faridondon,
Vive la faridondaine!

BERANGER.

THE popular humours of a great city are a never-failing source of amusement to the man whose sympathies are hospitable enough to embrace all his kind, and who, refined though he may be himself, will not sneer at the humble wit or grotesque peculiarities of the boozing mechanic, the squalid beggar, the vicious urchin, and all the motley group of the idle, the reckless, and the imitative that swarm in the alleys and broadways of a metropolis. He who walks through a great city to find subjects for weeping, may, God knows, find plenty at every corner to wring his heart; but let such a man walk on his course, and enjoy his grief alone — we are not of those who would accompany him. The miseries of us poor earth-dwellers gain no alleviation from the sympathy of those who merely hunt them out to be pathetic over them. The weeping philosopher too often impairs his eyesight by his woe, and becomes unable from his tears to see the remedies for the evils

which he deplores. Thus it will often be found that the man of no tears is the truest philanthropist, as he is the best physician who wears a cheerful face, even in the worst of cases.

So many pens have been employed to point out the miseries, and so many to condemn the crimes and vices, and more serious follies of the multitude, that our's shall not increase the number, at least in this chapter. Our present task shall be less ungracious, and wandering through the busy haunts of great cities, we shall seek only for amusement, and note as we pass a few of the harmless follies and whimsies of the poor.

And, first of all, walk where we will, we cannot help hearing from every side a phrase repeated with delight, and received with laughter, by men with hard hands and dirty faces — by saucy butcher lads and errand-boys — by loose women — by hackney coachmen, cabriolet drivers, and idle fellows who loiter at the corners of streets. Not one utters this phrase without producing a laugh from all within hearing. It seems applicable to every circumstance, and is the universal answer to every question; in short, it is the favourite slang phrase of the day, a phrase that, while its brief season of popularity lasts, throws a dash of fun and frolicsomeness over the existence of squalid poverty and ill-requited labour, and gives them reason to laugh as well as their more fortunate fellows in a higher stage of society.

London is peculiarly fertile in this sort of phrases, which spring up suddenly, no one knows exactly in what spot, and pervade the whole population in a few hours, no one knows how. Many years ago the favourite phrase (for, though but a monosyllable, it was a phrase in itself) was Quoz. This odd word took the fancy of the multitude in an extraordinary degree, and very soon acquired an almost boundless meaning. When vulgar wit wished to mark its incredulity and raise a laugh at the same time, there was no resource so sure as this popular piece of slang. When a man was asked a favour which he did not choose to grant, he marked his sense of the suitor's unparalleled presumption by exclaiming *Quoz!* When a mischievous urchin wished to annoy a passenger, and create mirth for his chums, he looked him in the face, and cried out *Quoz!* and the exclamation never failed in its object. When a disputant was desirous of throwing a doubt upon the veracity of his opponent, and getting summarily rid of an argument which he could not overturn, he uttered the word *Quoz,* with a contemptuous curl of his lip and an impatient shrug of his shoulders. The universal monosyllable conveyed all his meaning, and not only told his opponent that he lied, but that he erred egregiously if he thought that any one was such a nincompoop as to believe him. Every alehouse resounded with *Quoz;* every street corner was noisy with it, and every wall for miles around was chalked with it.

But, like all other earthly things, *Quoz* had its season, and passed away as suddenly as it arose, never again to be the pet and the idol of the populace. A new claimant drove it from its place, and held undisputed sway till, in its turn, it was hurled from its pre-eminence, and a successor appointed in its stead.

"*What a shocking bad hat!*" was the phrase that was next in vogue. No sooner had it become universal, than thousands of idle but sharp eyes were on the watch for the passenger whose hat showed any signs, however slight, of ancient service. Immediately the cry arose, and, like the whar-whoop of the Indians, was repeated by a hundred discordant throats. He was a wise man who, finding himself under these circumstances "the observed of all observers," bore his honours meekly. He who showed symptoms of ill-feeling at the imputations cast upon his hat, only brought upon himself redoubled notice. The mob soon perceive whether a man is irritable, and, if of their own class, they love to make sport of him. When such a man, and with such a hat, passed in those days through a crowded neighbourhood, he might think himself fortunate if his annoyances were confined to the shouts and cries of the populace. The obnoxious hat was often snatched from his head, and thrown into the gutter by some practical joker, and then raised, covered with mud, upon the end of a stick, for the admiration of the

spectators, who held their sides with laughter, and exclaimed in the pauses of their mirth, "*Oh! what a shocking bad hat!*" "*What a shocking bad hat!*" Many a nervous, poor man, whose purse could but ill spare the outlay, doubtless purchased a new hat before the time, in order to avoid exposure in this manner.

The origin of this singular saying, which made fun for the metropolis for months, is not involved in the same obscurity as that which shrouds the origin of *Quoz* and some others. There had been a hotly-contested election for the borough of Southwark, and one of the candidates was an eminent hatter. This gentleman, in canvassing the electors, adopted a somewhat professional mode of conciliating their good-will, and of bribing them without letting them perceive that they were bribed. Whenever he called upon or met a voter whose hat was not of the best material, or, being so, had seen its best days, he invariably said, "*What a shocking bad hat you have got; call at my warehouse, and you shall have a new one!*" Upon the day of election this circumstance was remembered, and his opponents made the most of it, by inciting the crowd to keep up an incessant cry of "*What a shocking bad hat!*" all the time the honourable candidate was addressing them. From Southwark the phrase spread over all London, and reigned, for a time, the supreme slang of the season.

Hookey Walker, derived from the chorus of a popular ballad, was also high in favour at one time, and

served, like its predecessor, *Quoz*, to answer all questions. In the course of time the latter word alone became the favourite, and was uttered with a peculiar drawl upon the first syllable, and a sharp turn upon the last. If a lively servant girl was importuned for a kiss by a fellow she did not care about, she cocked her little nose, and cried "*Walker!*" If a dustman asked his friend for the loan of a shilling, and his friend was either unable or unwilling to accommodate him, the probable answer he would receive was "*Walker!*" If a drunken man was reeling along the streets, and a boy pulled his coat-tails, or a man knocked his hat over his eyes to make fun of him, the joke was always accompanied by the same exclamation. This lasted for two or three months, and "*Walker!*" walked off the stage, never more to be revived for the entertainment of that or any future generation.

The next phrase was a most preposterous one. Who invented it, how it arose, or where it was first heard, are alike unknown. Nothing about it is certain, but that for months it was *the* slang *par excellence* of the Londoners, and afforded them a vast gratification. "*There he goes with his eye out!*" or "*There she goes with her eye out!*" as the sex of the party alluded to might be, was in the mouth of everybody who knew the town. The sober part of the community were as much puzzled by this unaccountable saying as the vulgar were delighted with it. The wise thought it very foolish, but the

many thought it very funny, and the idle amused themselves by chalking it upon walls, or scribbling it upon monuments. But, "all that 's bright must fade," even in slang. The people grew tired of their hobby, and "*There he goes with his eye out!*" was heard no more in its accustomed haunts.

Another very odd phrase came into repute in a brief space afterwards, in the form of the impertinent and not universally apposite query, "*Has your mother sold her mangle?*" But its popularity was not of that boisterous and cordial kind which ensures a long continuance of favour. What tended to impede its progress was, that it could not be well applied to the older portions of society. It consequently ran but a brief career, and then sank into oblivion. Its successor enjoyed a more extended fame, and laid its foundations so deep, that years and changing fashions have not sufficed to eradicate it. This phrase was "*Flare up!*" and it is, even now, a colloquialism in common use. It took its rise in the time of the Reform riots, when Bristol was nearly half burned by the infuriated populace. The flames were said to have *flared up* in the devoted city. Whether there was anything peculiarly captivating in the sound, or in the idea of these words, is hard to say; but whatever was the reason, it tickled the mob-fancy mightily, and drove all other slang out of the field before it. Nothing was to be heard all over London but "*flare up!*" It answered all questions,

settled all disputes, was applied to all persons, all things, and all circumstances, and became suddenly the most comprehensive phrase in the English language. The man who had overstepped the bounds of decorum in his speech was said to have *flared up;* he who had paid visits too repeated to the gin-shop, and got damaged in consequence, had *flared up.* To put one's-self into a passion; to stroll out on a nocturnal frolic, and alarm a neighbourhood, or to create a disturbance in any shape, was to *flare up.* A lovers' quarrel was a *flare up;* so was a boxing-match between two blackguards in the streets, and the preachers of sedition and revolution recommended the English nation to *flare up,* like the French. So great a favourite was the word, that people loved to repeat it for its very sound. They delighted apparently in hearing their own organs articulate it; and labouring men, when none who could respond to the call were within hearing, would often startle the aristocratic echoes of the West by the well-known slang phrase of the East. Even in the dead hours of the night, the ears of those who watched late, or who could not sleep, were saluted with the same sound. The drunkard reeling home showed that he was still a man and a citizen, by calling "*flare up*" in the pauses of his hiccough. Drink had deprived him of the power of arranging all other ideas; his intellect was sunk to the level of the brute's; but he clung to humanity by the one last link of the popular cry.

While he could vociferate that sound, he had rights as an Englishman, and would not sleep in a gutter, like a dog! Onwards he went, disturbing quiet streets and comfortable people by his whoop, till exhausted nature could support him no more, and he rolled powerless into the road. When, in due time afterwards, the policeman stumbled upon him as he lay, that guardian of the peace turned the full light of his lantern on his face, and exclaimed, "Here's a poor devil who's been flaring up!" Then came the stretcher, on which the victim of deep potations was carried to the watchhouse, and pitched into a dirty cell, among a score of wretches about as far gone as himself, who saluted their new comrade by a loud, long shout of *flare up!*

So universal was this phrase, and so enduring seemed its popularity, that a speculator, who knew not the evanescence of slang, established a weekly newspaper under its name. But he was like the man who built his house upon the sand; his foundation gave way under him, and the phrase and the newspaper were washed into the mighty sea of the things that were. The people grew at last weary of the monotony, and "*flare up*" became vulgar even among them. Gradually it was left to little boys who did not know the world, and in process of time sank altogether into neglect. It is now heard no more as a piece of popular slang; but the words are still used to signify any sudden outburst either of fire, disturbance, or ill-nature.

The next phrase that enjoyed the favour of the million was less concise, and seems to have been originally aimed against precocious youths who gave themselves the airs of manhood before their time. "*Does your mother know you're out?*" was the provoking query addressed to young men of more than reasonable swagger, who smoked cigars in the streets, and wore false whiskers to look irresistible. We have seen many a conceited fellow who could not suffer a woman to pass him without staring her out of countenance, reduced at once into his natural insignificance by the mere utterance of this phrase. Apprentice lads and shopmen in their Sunday clothes held the words in abhorrence, and looked fierce when they were applied to them. Altogether the phrase had a very salutary effect, and in a thousand instances showed young Vanity, that it was not half so pretty and engaging as it thought itself. What rendered it so provoking was the doubt it implied as to the capability of self-guidance possessed by the individual to whom it was addressed. "*Does your mother know you're out?*" was a query of mock concern and solicitude, implying regret and concern that one so young and inexperienced in the ways of a great city should be allowed to wander abroad without the guidance of a parent. Hence the great wrath of those who verged on manhood, but had not reached it, whenever they were made the subject of it. Even older heads did not like it; and

the heir of a ducal house, and inheritor of a warrior's name, to whom they were applied by a cabriolet driver, who was ignorant of his rank, was so indignant at the affront, that he summoned the offender before the magisterial bench. The fellow had wished to impose upon his Lordship by asking double the fare he was entitled to, and when his Lordship resisted the demand, he was insultingly asked "if his mother knew he was out?" All the drivers on the stand joined in the query, and his Lordship was fain to escape their laughter by walking away with as much haste as his dignity would allow. The man pleaded ignorance that his customer was a Lord, but offended justice fined him for his mistake.

When this phrase had numbered its appointed days, it died away, like its predecessors, and "*Who are you?*" reigned in its stead. This new favourite, like a mushroom, seems to have sprung up in a night, or, like a frog in Cheapside, to have come down in a sudden shower. One day it was unheard, unknown, uninvented; the next it pervaded London; every alley resounded with it; every highway was musical with it,

> "And street to street, and lane to lane flung back
> The one unvarying cry."

The phrase was uttered quickly, and with a sharp sound upon the first and last words, leaving the middle one little more than an aspiration. Like all

its compeers which had been extensively popular, it was applicable to almost every variety of circumstance. The lovers of a plain answer to a plain question did not like it at all. Insolence made use of it to give offence; ignorance, to avoid exposing itself; and waggery, to create laughter. Every new comer into an alehouse tap-room was asked unceremoniously, "*Who are you?*" and if he looked foolish, scratched his head, and did not know what to reply, shouts of boisterous merriment resounded on every side. An authoritative disputant was not unfrequently put down, and presumption of every kind checked by the same query. When its popularity was at its height, a gentleman, feeling the hand of a thief in his pocket, turned suddenly round, and caught him in the act, exclaiming, "*Who are you?*" The mob which gathered round applauded to the very echo, and thought it the most capital joke they had ever heard—the very acmé of wit—the very essence of humour. Another circumstance, of a similar kind, gave an additional fillip to the phrase, and infused new life and vigour into it, just as it was dying away. The scene occurred in the chief criminal court of the kingdom. A prisoner stood at the bar; the offence with which he had been charged was clearly proved against him; his counsel had been heard, not in his defence, but in extenuation, insisting upon his previous good life and character, as reasons for the lenity of the court. "And where are your witnesses?" inquired the learned judge

who presided. "Please you, my Lord, I knows the prisoner at the bar, and a more honester feller never breathed," said a rough voice in the gallery. The officers of the court looked aghast, and the strangers tittered with ill-suppressed laughter. "*Who are you?*" said the Judge, looking suddenly up, but with imperturbable gravity. The court was convulsed; the titter broke out into a laugh, and it was several minutes before silence and decorum could be restored. When the Ushers recovered their self-possession, they made diligent search for the profane transgressor; but he was not to be found. Nobody knew him; nobody had seen him. After a while the business of the court again proceeded. The next prisoner brought up for trial augured favourably of his prospects when he learned that the solemn lips of the representative of justice had uttered the popular phrase as if he felt and appreciated it. There was no fear that such a judge would use undue severity; his heart was with the people; he understood their language and their manners, and would make allowances for the temptations which drove them into crime. So thought many of the prisoners, if we may infer it from the fact, that the learned judge suddenly acquired an immense increase of popularity. The praise of his wit was in every mouth, and "*Who are you?*" renewed its lease, and remained in possession of public favour for another term in consequence.

But it must not be supposed that there were no

interregni between the dominion of one slang phrase and another. They did not arise in one long line of unbroken succession, but shared with song the possession of popular favour. Thus, when the people were in the mood for music, slang advanced its claims to no purpose, and, when they were inclined for slang, the sweet voice of music wooed them in vain. About twenty years ago London resounded with one chorus, with the love of which everybody seemed to be smitten. Girls and boys, young men and old, maidens and wives, and widows, were all alike musical. There was an absolute mania for singing, and the worst of it was, that, like good Father Philip, in the romance of "The Monastery," they seemed utterly unable to change their tune. "Cherry ripe!" "Cherry ripe!" was the universal cry of all the idle in the town. Every unmelodious voice gave utterance to it; every crazy fiddle, every cracked flute, every wheezy pipe, every street organ was heard in the same strain, until studious and quiet men stopped their ears in desperation, or fled miles away into the fields or woodlands, to be at peace. This plague lasted for a twelvemonth, until the very name of cherries became an abomination in the land. At last the excitement wore itself away, and the tide of favour set in a new direction. Whether it was another song or a slang phrase, is difficult to determine at this distance of time; but certain it is, that very shortly afterwards, people went mad upon a dramatic subject, and

nothing was to be heard of but "Tom and Jerry." Verbal wit had amused the multitude long enough, and they became more practical in their recreation. Every youth on the town was seized with the fierce desire of distinguishing himself, by knocking down the "*charlies*," being locked up all night in a watch-house, or kicking up a row among loose women and blackguard men in the low dens of St. Giles's. Imitative boys vied with their elders in similar exploits, until this unworthy passion, for such it was, had lasted, like other follies, its appointed time, and the town became merry after another fashion. It was next thought the height of vulgar wit to answer all questions by placing the point of the thumb upon the tip of the nose, and twirling the fingers in the air. If one man wished to insult or annoy another, he had only to make use of this cabalistic sign in his face, and his object was accomplished. At every street corner where a group was assembled, the spectator who was curious enough to observe their movements, would be sure to see the fingers of some of them at their noses, either as a mark of incredulity, surprise, refusal, or mockery, before he had watched two minutes. There is some remnant of this absurd custom to be seen to this day; but it is thought low, even among the vulgar.

About six years ago, London became again most preposterously musical. The *vox populi* wore itself hoarse by singing the praises of "The Sea, the Sea!" If a stranger (and a philosopher) had walked

through London, and listened to the universal chorus, he might have constructed a very pretty theory upon the love of the English for the sea-service, and our acknowledged superiority over all other nations upon that element. "No wonder," he might have said, "that this people is invincible upon the ocean. The love of it mixes with their daily thoughts: they celebrate it even in the market-place: their street-minstrels excite charity by it; and high and low, young and old, male and female, chant *Io pæans* in its praise. Love is not honoured in the national songs of this warlike race — Bacchus is no god to them; they are men of sterner mould, and think only of 'the Sea, the Sea!' and the means of conquering upon it."

Such would, doubtless, have been his impression if he had taken the evidence only of his ears. Alas! in those days for the refined ears that *were* musical! great was their torture when discord, with its thousand diversities of tone, struck up this appalling anthem — there was no escape from it. The migratory minstrels of Savoy caught the strain, and pealed it down the long vistas of quiet streets, till their innermost and snuggest apartments re-echoed with the sound. Men were obliged to endure this crying evil for full six months, wearied to desperation, and made *sea*-sick on the dry land.

Several other songs sprang up in due succession afterwards, but none of them, with the exception

of one, entitled "All round my Hat," enjoyed any extraordinary share of favour, until an American actor introduced a vile song called "Jim Crow." The singer sang his verses in appropriate costume, with grotesque gesticulations, and a sudden whirl of his body at the close of each verse. It took the taste of the town immediately, and for months the ears of orderly people were stunned by the senseless chorus—

"Turn about and wheel about,
And do just so—
Turn about and wheel about,
And jump, Jim Crow!"

Street-minstrels blackened their faces in order to give proper effect to the verses; and fatherless urchins, who had to choose between thieving and singing for their livelihood, took the latter course, as likely to be the more profitable, as long as the public taste remained in that direction. The uncouth dance, its accompaniment, might be seen in its full perfection on market nights in any great thoroughfare; and the words of the song might be heard, piercing above all the din and buzz of the ever-moving multitude. He, the calm observer, who during the hey-day popularity of this doggrel,

"Sate beside the public way,
Thick strewn with summer dust, and saw the stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,"

might have exclaimed with Shelley, whose fine lines we quote, that

> "The million, with fierce song and maniac dance,
> Did rage around."

The philosophic theorist we have already supposed soliloquising upon the English character, and forming his opinion of it from their exceeding love for a sea-song, might, if he had again dropped suddenly into London, have formed another very plausible theory to account for our unremitting efforts for the abolition of the Slave Trade. "Benevolent people!" he might have said, "how unbounded are your sympathies! Your unhappy brethren of Africa, differing from you only in the colour of their skins, are so dear to you, and you begrudge so little the twenty millions you have paid on their behalf, that you love to have a memento of them continually in your sight. Jim Crow is the representative of that injured race, and as such is the idol of your populace! See how they all sing his praises!—how they imitate his peculiarities!—how they repeat his name in their moments of leisure and relaxation! They even carve images of him to adorn their hearths, that his cause and his sufferings may never be forgotten! Oh, philanthropic England!—oh, vanguard of civilization!"

Such are a few of the peculiarities of the London multitude, when no riot, no execution, no murder,

no balloon, disturbs the even current of their thoughts. These are the whimseys of the mass — the harmless follies by which they unconsciously endeavour to lighten the load of care which presses upon their existence. The wise man, even though he smile at them, will not altogether withhold his sympathy, and will say, "Let them enjoy their slang phrases and their choruses if they will; and if they cannot be happy, at least let them be merry." To the Englishman, as well as to the Frenchman of whom Beranger sings, there may be some comfort in so small a thing as a song, and we may own with him that

"Au peuple attristé
Ce qui rendra la gaîté,
C'est la GAUDRIOLE!
O gué!
C'est la GAUDRIOLE!"

THE O. P. MANIA.

And these things bred a great combustion in the town.
Wagstaffe's Apparition of Mother Haggis.

The acrimonious warfare carried on for a length of time by the playgoers of London against the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre, is one of the most singular instances upon record of the small folly which will sometimes pervade a multitude of intelligent men. Carried on at first from mere obstinacy by a few, and afterwards for mingled obstinacy and frolic by a greater number, it increased at last to such a height, that the sober dwellers in the provinces held up their hands in astonishment, and wondered that the people of London should be such fools. As much firmness and perseverance displayed in a better cause, might have achieved important triumphs; and we cannot but feel regret, in recording this matter, that so much good and wholesome energy should have been thrown away on so unworthy an object. But we will begin with the beginning, and trace the O. P. mania from its source.

On the night of the 20th of September, 1808, the old theatre of Covent-Garden was totally de-

stroyed by fire. Preparations were immediately made for the erection of a more splendid edifice, and the managers, Harris and the celebrated John Philip Kemble, announced that the new theatre should be without a rival in Europe. In less than three months, the rubbish of the old building was cleared away, and the foundation-stone of the new one laid with all due ceremony by the Duke of Sussex. With so much celerity were the works carried on that, in nine months more, the edifice was completed, both without and within. The opening night was announced for the 18th of September 1809, within two days of a twelvemonth since the destruction of the original building.

But the undertaking had proved more expensive than the Committee anticipated. To render the pit entrance more commodious, it had been deemed advisable to remove a low public-house that stood in the way. This turned out a matter of no little difficulty, for the proprietor was a man well skilled in driving a hard bargain. The more eager the Committee showed themselves to come to terms with him for his miserable pot-house, the more grasping he became in his demands for compensation. They were ultimately obliged to pay him an exorbitant sum. Added to this, the interior decorations were on the most costly scale; and Mrs. Siddons, and other members of the Kemble family, together with the celebrated Italian singer, Madame Catalani, had been engaged

at very high salaries. As the night of opening drew near, the Committee found that they had gone a little beyond their means; and they issued a notice, stating that, in consequence of the great expense they had been at in building the theatre, and the large salaries they had agreed to pay, to secure the services of the most eminent actors, they were under the necessity of fixing the prices of admission at seven shillings to the boxes and four shillings to the pit, instead of six shillings and three and sixpence, as heretofore.

This announcement created the greatest dissatisfaction. The boxes might have borne the oppression, but the dignity of the pit was wounded. A war-cry was raised immediately. For some weeks previous to the opening, a continual clatter was kept up in clubs and coffee-rooms, against what was considered a most unconstitutional aggression on the rights of play-going man. The newspapers assiduously kept up the excitement, and represented, day after day, to the managers the impolicy of the proposed advance. The bitter politics of the time were disregarded, and Kemble and Covent-Garden became as great sources of interest as Napoleon and France. Public attention was the more fixed upon the proceedings at Covent-Garden, since it was the only patent theatre then in existence, Drury-Lane theatre having also been destroyed by fire in the month of February previous. But great as was the indignation of the

lovers of the drama at that time, no one could have anticipated the extraordinary lengths to which opposition would be carried.

First Night, September 20th. — The performances announced were the tragedy of "Macbeth" and the afterpiece of "The Quaker." The house was excessively crowded (the pit especially) with persons who had gone for no other purpose than to make a disturbance. They soon discovered another grievance to add to the list. The whole of the lower, and three-fourths of the upper tier of boxes, were let out for the season; so that those who had paid at the door for a seat in the boxes, were obliged to mount to a level with the gallery. Here they were stowed into boxes which, from their size and shape, received the contemptuous, and not inappropriate designation of pigeon-holes. This was considered in the light of a new aggression upon established rights; and long before the curtain drew up, the managers might have heard in their green-room the indignant shouts of "Down with the pigeon-holes!"—"Old prices for ever!" Amid this din the curtain rose, and Mr. Kemble stood forward to deliver a poetical address in honour of the occasion. The riot now began in earnest; not a word of the address was audible, from the stamping and groaning of the people in the pit. This continued, almost without intermission, through the five acts of the tragedy. Now and then, the sublime acting of Mrs. Siddons, as "the awful wo-

man," hushed the noisy multitude into silence, in spite of themselves: but it was only for a moment; the recollection of their fancied wrongs made them ashamed of their admiration, and they shouted and hooted again more vigorously than before. The comedy of Munden in the afterpiece met with no better reception; not a word was listened to, and the curtain fell amid still increasing uproar and shouts of "Old prices!" Some magistrates, who happened to be present, zealously came to the rescue, and appeared on the stage with copies of the Riot Act. This ill-judged proceeding made the matter worse. The men of the pit were exasperated by the indignity, and strained their lungs to express how deeply they felt it. Thus remained the war till long after midnight, when the belligerents withdrew from sheer exhaustion.

Second Night. — The crowd was not so great; all those who had gone on the previous evening to listen to the performances, now stayed away, and the rioters had it nearly all to themselves. With the latter, "the play was *not* the thing," and Macheath and Polly sang in "The Beggar's Opera" in vain. The actors and the public appeared to have changed sides — the audience acted, and the actors listened. A new feature of this night's proceedings was the introduction of placards. Several were displayed from the pit and boxes, inscribed in large letters with the words, "Old prices." With a view of striking terror, the constables who

had been plentifully introduced into the house, attacked the placard-bearers, and succeeded, after several severe battles, in dragging off a few of them to the neighbouring watch-house, in Bow Street. Confusion now became worse and worse confounded. The pitites screamed themselves hoarse; while, to increase the uproar, some mischievous frequenters of the upper regions squeaked through dozens of cat-calls, till the combined noise was enough to blister every tympanum in the house.

Third Night.—The appearance of several gentlemen in the morning at the bar of the Bow Street police office, to answer for their riotous conduct, had been indignantly commented upon during the day. All augured ill for the quiet of the night. The performances announced were "Richard the Third" and "The Poor Soldier," but the popularity of the tragedy could not obtain it a hearing. The pitites seemed to be drawn into closer union by the attacks made upon them, and to act more in concert than on the previous nights. The placards were, also, more numerous; not only the pit, but the boxes and galleries exhibited them. Among the most conspicuous, was one inscribed, "John Bull against John Kemble.—Who'll win?" Another bore "King George for ever! but no King Kemble." A third was levelled against Madame Catalani, whose large salary was supposed to be one of the causes of the increased prices, and was inscribed "No foreigners to tax us — we're taxed

enough already." This last was a double-barrelled one, expressing both dramatic and political discontent, and was received with loud cheers by the pitites.

The tragedy and afterpiece were concluded full two hours before their regular time; and the cries for Mr. Kemble became so loud, that the manager thought proper to obey the summons. Amid all these scenes of uproar he preserved his equanimity, and was never once betrayed into any expression of petulance or anger. With some difficulty he obtained a hearing. He entered into a detail of the affairs of the theatre, assuring the audience at the same time of the solicitude of the proprietors to accommodate themselves to the public wish. This was received with some applause, as it was thought at first to manifest a willingness to come back to the old prices, and the pit eagerly waited for the next sentence, that was to confirm their hopes. That sentence was never uttered, for Mr. Kemble, folding his arms majestically, added, in his deep tragic voice, "Ladies and Gentlemen, I wait here to know what you want!" Immediately the uproar was renewed, and became so tremendous and so deafening, that the manager, seeing the uselessness of further parley, made his bow and retired.

A gentleman then rose in the boxes and requested a hearing. He obtained it without difficulty. He began by inveighing in severe terms

against the pretended ignorance of Mr. Kemble, in asking them so offensively what they wanted, and concluded by exhorting the people never to cease their opposition until they brought down the prices to their old level. The speaker, whose name was understood to be Leigh, then requested a cheer for the actors, to show that no disrespect was intended them. The cheer was given immediately.

A barrister of the name of Smythe then rose to crave another hearing for Mr. Kemble. The manager stood forth again, calm, unmoved, and severe. "Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I wait here to know your wishes." Mr. Leigh, who took upon himself, "for that night only," the character of popular leader, said, the only reply he could give was one in three words, "the old prices." Hereat the shouts of applause again rose, till the building rang. Still serene amid the storm, the manager endeavoured to enter into explanations. The men of the pit would hear nothing of the sort. They wanted entire and absolute acquiescence. Less would not satisfy them; and, as Mr. Kemble only wished to explain, they would not hear a word. He finally withdrew amid a noise to which Babel must have been comparatively silent.

Fourth night.—The rioters were more obstinate than ever. The noises were increased by the addition of whistles, bugle-horns, and watchmen's rattles, sniffling, snorting, and clattering from all parts of the house. Human lungs were taxed

to the uttermost, and the stamping on the floor raised such a dust as to render all objects but dimly visible. In placards, too, there was greater variety. The loose wits of the town had all day been straining their ingenuity to invent new ones. Among them were, "Come forth, O Kemble! come forth and tremble!" "Foolish John Kemble, we'll make you tremble!" and "No cats! no Catalani! English actors for ever!"

Those who wish to oppose a mob successfully, should never lose their temper. It is a proof of weakness which masses of people at once perceive, and never fail to take advantage of. Thus, when the managers unwisely resolved to fight the mob with their own weapons, it only increased the opposition it was intended to allay. A dozen pugilists, commanded by a notorious boxer of the day, were introduced into the pit, to use the *argumentum ad hominem* to the rioters. Continual scuffles ensued: but the invincible resolution of the playgoers would not allow them to quail; it rather aroused them to renewed opposition, and a determination never to submit or yield. It also strengthened their cause, by affording them further ground of complaint against the managers.

The performances announced on the bills were the opera of "Love in a Village," and "Who wins?" but the bills had it all to themselves, for neither actors nor public were much burthened with them. The latter, indeed, afforded some sport.

The title was too apt to the occasion to escape notice, and shouts of "Who wins? who wins?" displaced for a time the accustomed cry of old prices.

After the fall of the curtain, Mr. Leigh, with another gentleman, again spoke, complaining bitterly of the introduction of the prize-fighters, and exhorting the public never to give in. Mr. Kemble was again called forward; but when he came, the full tide of discord ran so strongly against him that, being totally unable to stem it, he withdrew. Each man seemed to shout as if he had been a Stentor; and when his lungs were wearied, took to his feet and stamped, till all the black coats in his vicinity became grey with dust. At last the audience were tired out, and the theatre was closed before eleven o'clock.

Fifth night.—The play was Coleman's amusing comedy of "John Bull." There was no diminution of the uproar. Every note on the diapason of discord was run through. The prize-fighters, or *hitites* as they were called, mustered in considerable numbers, and the battles between them and the *pitites* were fierce and many. It was now, for the first time, that the letters O. P. came into general use as an abbreviation of the accustomed watch-word of *old prices.* Several placards were thus inscribed; and, as brevity is so desirable in shouting, the mob adopted the emendation. As usual, the manager was called for. After some delay he came forward, and was listened to with considerable

patience. He repeated, in respectful terms, the great loss that would be occasioned to the proprietors by a return to the old prices, and offered to submit a statement of their accounts to the eminent lawyers, Sir Vicary Gibbs and Sir Thomas Plumer; the eminent merchants, Sir Francis Baring and Mr. Angerstein; and Mr. Whitmore, the Governor of the Bank of England. By their decision as to the possibility of carrying on the theatre at the old prices, he would consent to be governed, and he hoped the public would do the same. This reasonable proposition was scouted immediately. Not even the high and reputable names he had mentioned were thought to afford any guarantee for impartiality. The pitites were too wrong-headed to abate one iota of their pretensions; and they had been too much insulted by the prize-fighters in the manager's pay, to show any consideration for him, or agree to any terms he might propose. They wanted full acquiescence, and nothing less. Thus the conference broke off, and the manager retired amid a storm of hisses.

An Irish gentleman, named O'Reilly, then stood up in one of the boxes. With true Irish gallantry, he came to the rescue of an ill-used lady. He said he was disgusted at the attacks made upon Madame Catalani, the finest singer in the world, and a lady inestimable in private life. It was unjust, unmanly, and un-English to make the innocent suffer for the guilty; and he hoped this blot would be no

longer allowed to stain a fair cause. As to the quarrel with the manager, he recommended them to persevere. They were not only wronged by his increased prices, but insulted by his boxers, and he hoped, that before they had done with him, they would teach him a lesson he would not soon forget. The gallant Hibernian soon became a favourite, and sat down amid loud cheers.

Sixth night.—No signs of a cessation of hostilities on the one side, or of a return to the old prices on the other. The playgoers seemed to grow more united as the managers grew more obstinate. The actors had by far the best time of it; for they were spared nearly all the labour of their parts, and merely strutted on the stage to see how matters went on, and then strutted off again. Notwithstanding the remonstrance of Mr. O'Reilly on the previous night, numerous placards reflecting upon Madame Catalani were exhibited. One was inscribed with the following doggrel:—

> "Seventeen thousand a-year goes pat,
> To Kemble, his sister, and Madame Cat."

On another was displayed, in large letters, "No compromise, old prices, and native talent!" Some of these were stuck against the front of the boxes, and others were hoisted from the pit on long poles. The following specimens will suffice to show the spirit of them; wit they had none, or humour either,

although when they were successively exhibited, they elicited roars of laughter:—

"John Kemble alone is the cause of this riot;
When he lowers his prices, John Bull will be quiet."

"John Kemble be damn'd,
We will not be cramm'd."

"Squire Kemble
Begins to tremble."

The curtain fell as early as nine o'clock, when there being loud calls for Mr. Kemble, he stood forward. He announced that Madame Catalani, against whom so unjustifiable a prejudice had been excited, had thrown up her engagement rather than stand in the way of any accommodation of existing differences. This announcement was received with great applause. Mr. Kemble then went on to vindicate himself and co-proprietors from the charge of despising public opinion. No assertion, he assured them, could be more unjust. They were sincerely anxious to bring these unhappy differences to a close, and he thought he had acted in the most fair and reasonable manner in offering to submit the accounts to an impartial committee, whose decision, and the grounds for it, should be fully promulgated. This speech was received with cheering, but interrupted at the close by some individuals, who objected to any committee of the manager's nomination. This led to a renewal of the uproar, and it was some time before silence could be ob-

tained. When, at last, he was able to make himself heard, he gave notice, that until the decision of the committee had been drawn up, the theatre should remain closed. Immediately every person in the pit stood up, and a long shout of triumph resounded through the house, which was heard at the extremity of Bow Street. As if this result had been anticipated, a placard was at the same moment hoisted, inscribed, "Here lies the body of NEW PRICE, an ugly brat and base born, who expired on the 23rd of September 1809, aged six days.—*Requiescat in pace!*"

Mr. Kemble then retired, and the pitites flung up their hats in the air, or sprang over the benches, shouting and hallooing in the exuberance of their joy; and thus ended the first act of this popular farce.

The committee ultimately chosen differed from that first named, Alderman Sir Charles Price, Bart. and Mr. Silvester, the Recorder of London, being substituted for Sir Francis Baring and Sir Vicary Gibbs. In a few days they had examined the multitudinous documents of the theatre, and agreed to a report which was published in all the newspapers, and otherwise distributed. They stated the average profits of the six preceding years at $6\frac{3}{8}$ per cent, being only $1\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. beyond the legal interest of money, to recompense the proprietors for all their care and enterprise. Under the new prices they would receive $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. profit; but if they

returned to the old prices, they would suffer a loss of fifteen shillings per cent. upon their capital. Under these circumstances, they could do no other than recommend the proprietors to continue the new prices.

This report gave no satisfaction. It certainly convinced the reasonable, but they, unfortunately, were in a minority of one to ten. The managers, disregarding the outcry that it excited, advertised the recommencement of the performances for Wednesday the 4th of October following. They endeavoured to pack the house with their friends, but the sturdy O. P. men were on the alert, and congregated in the pit in great numbers. The play was "The Beggar's Opera," but, as on former occasions, it was wholly inaudible. The noises were systematically arranged, and the actors, seeing how useless it was to struggle against the popular feeling, hurried over their parts as quickly as they could, and the curtain fell shortly after nine o'clock. Once more the manager essayed the difficult task of convincing madness by appealing to reason. As soon as the din of the rattles and post-horns would permit him to speak, he said, he would throw himself on the fairness of the most enlightened metropolis in the world. He was sure, however strongly they might feel upon the subject, they would not be accessory to the ruin of the theatre, by insisting upon a return to the former prices. Notwithstanding the little sop he had thrown out to feed the

vanity of this roaring Cerberus, the only answer he received was a renewal of the noise, intermingled with shouts of "Hoax! hoax! imposition!" Mr. O'Reilly, the gallant friend of Madame Catalani, afterwards addressed the pit, and said no reliance could be placed on the report of the committee. The profits of the theatre were evidently great: they had saved the heavy salary of Madame Catalani; and by shutting out the public from all the boxes but the pigeon-holes, they made large sums. The first and second tiers were let at high rents to notorious courtesans, several of whom he then saw in the house; and it was clear that the managers preferred a large revenue from this impure source to the reasonable profits they would receive from respectable people. Loud cheers greeted this speech; every eye was turned towards the boxes, and the few ladies in them immediately withdrew. At the same moment, some inveterate pitite hoisted a large placard, on which was inscribed,

"We lads of the pit
Will never submit."

Several others were introduced. One of them was a caricature likeness of Mr. Kemble, asking, "What do you want?" with a pitite replying, "The old prices, and no pigeon-holes!" Others merely bore the drawing of a large *key*, in allusion to a notorious house in the neighbourhood, the denizens of which were said to be great frequenters

of the private boxes. These appeared to give the managers more annoyance than all the rest, and the prize-fighters made vigorous attacks upon the holders of them. Several persons were, on this night, and indeed nearly every night, taken into custody, and locked up in the watchhouse. On their appearance the following morning, they were generally held to bail in considerable sums to keep the peace. This proceeding greatly augmented the animosity of the pit.

It would be useless to detail the scenes of confusion which followed night after night. For about three weeks the war continued with unabated fury. Its characteristics were nearly always the same. Invention was racked to discover new noises, and it was thought a happy idea when one fellow got into the gallery with a dustman's bell, and rang it furiously. Dogs were also brought into the boxes, to add their sweet voices to the general uproar. The animals seemed to join in it *con amore*, and one night a large mastiff growled and barked so loudly, as to draw down upon his exertions three cheers from the gratified pitites.

So strong did the popular enthusiasm run in favour of the row, that well-dressed ladies appeared in the boxes with the letters O. P. on their bonnets. O. P. hats for the gentlemen were still more common, and some were so zealous in the cause, as to sport waistcoats with an O embroidered upon one flap and a P on the other. O. P. toothpicks were also in

fashion; and gentlemen and ladies carried O. P. handkerchiefs, which they waved triumphantly whenever the row was unusually deafening. The latter suggested the idea of O. P. flags, which were occasionally unfurled from the gallery to the length of a dozen feet. Sometimes the first part of the night's performances were listened to with comparative patience, a majority of the manager's friends being in possession of the house. But as soon as the half-price commenced, the row began again in all its pristine glory. At the fall of the curtain it soon became customary to sing "God save the King," the whole of the O. P.'s joining in loyal chorus. Sometimes this was followed by "Rule Britannia;" and, on two or three occasions, by a parody of the national anthem, which excited great laughter. A verse may not be uninteresting as a specimen.

"O Johnny Bull, be true,
Confound the prices new,
And make them fall!
Curse Kemble's politics,
Frustrate his knavish tricks,
On thee our hopes we fix,
T' upset them all!"

This done, they scrambled over the benches, got up sham fights in the pit, or danced the famous O. P. dance. The latter may as well be described here: half a dozen, or a dozen fellows formed in a ring, and stamped alternately with the right and

left foot, calling out at regular intervals, O. P.—O. P. with a drawling and monotonous sound. This uniformly lasted till the lights were put out, when the rioters withdrew, generally in gangs of ten or twenty, to defend themselves from sudden attacks on the part of the constables.

An idea seemed about this time to break in upon them, that notwithstanding the annoyance they caused the manager, they were aiding to fill his coffers. This was hinted at in some of the newspapers, and the consequence was, that many stayed away to punish him, if possible, under the silent system. But this did not last long. The love of mischief was as great an incentive to many of them as enmity to the new prices. Accidental circumstances also contributed to disturb the temporary calm. At the Westminster quarter-sessions, on the 27th of October, bills of indictment were preferred against forty-one persons for creating a disturbance and interrupting the performances of the theatre. The grand jury ignored twenty-seven of the bills, left two undecided, and found true bills against twelve. The latter exercised their right of traverse till the ensuing sessions. The preferment of these bills had the effect of re-awakening the subsiding excitement. Another circumstance about the same time gave a still greater impetus to it, and furnished the rioters with a chief, round whom they were eager to rally. Mr. Clifford, a barrister, appeared in the pit on the night of the 31st of October, with the

letters O. P. on his hat. Being a man of some note, he was pounced upon by the constables, and led off to Bow Street police office, where Brandon, the box-keeper, charged him with riotous and disorderly conduct. This was exactly what Clifford wanted. He told the presiding magistrate, a Mr. Read, that he had purposely displayed the letters on his hat, in order that the question of right might be determined before a competent tribunal. He denied that he had committed any offence, and seemed to manifest so intimate an acquaintance with the law upon the subject, that the magistrate, convinced by his reasoning, ordered his immediate dismissal, and stated that he had been taken into custody without the slightest grounds. The result was made known in the theatre a few minutes afterwards, where Mr. Clifford, on his appearance victorious, was received with reiterated huzzas. On his leaving the house, he was greeted by a mob of five or six hundred persons, who had congregated outside to do him honour as he passed. From that night the riots may be said to have recommenced, and "Clifford and O. P." became the rallying cry of the party. The officious box-keeper became at the same time the object of the popular dislike, and the contempt with which the genius and fine qualities of Mr. Kemble would not permit them to regard him, was fastened upon his underling. So much ill-feeling was directed towards the latter, that at this time a return to the old prices, unaccompanied

by his dismissal, would not have made the manager's peace with the pitites.

In the course of the few succeeding weeks, during which the riots continued with undiminished fury, O. P. medals were struck, and worn in great numbers in the theatre. A few of the ultra-zealous even wore them in the streets. A new fashion also came into favour for hats, waistcoats, and handkerchiefs, on which the mark, instead of the separate letters O and P, was a large O, with a small P in the middle of it: thus,

The managers, seeing that Mr. Clifford was so identified with the rioters, determined to make him responsible. An action was accordingly brought against him and other defendants in the Court of King's Bench. On the 20th of November, the Attorney-general moved, before Lord Ellenborough, for a rule to show cause why a criminal information should not be filed against Clifford for unlawfully conspiring with certain others to intimidate the proprietors of Covent-Garden Theatre, and force them, to their loss and detriment, to lower their prices of admission. The rule was granted, and an early day fixed for the trial. In the mean time, these proceedings kept up the acerbity of the O. P.s, and every night at the fall of the curtain, three groans were given for John Kemble and three cheers for John Bull.

It was during this year that the national Jubilee was celebrated, in honour of the fiftieth year of the reign of George III. When the riots had reached their fiftieth night, the O. P.s also determined to have a jubilee. All their previous efforts in the way of roaring, great as they were, were this night outdone, and would have continued long after "the wee short hour," had not the managers wisely put the extinguisher upon them and the lights about eleven o'clock.

Pending the criminal prosecution against himself, Mr. Clifford brought an action for false imprisonment against Brandon. The cause was fixed for trial in the Court of Common Pleas, on the 5th of December, before Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield. From an early hour in the morning all the avenues leading to the court were thronged with an eager multitude; all London was in anxiety for the result. So dense was the crowd, that counsel found the greatest difficulty in making their way into court. Mr. Sergeant Best was retained on the part of the plaintiff, and Mr. Sergeant Shepherd for the defence. The defendant put two pleas upon the record; first, that he was not guilty, and secondly, that he was justified. Sergeant Best, in stating the plaintiff's case, blamed the managers for all the disturbances that had taken place, and contended that his client, in affixing the letters O. P. to his hat, was not guilty of any offence. Even if he had joined in the noises, which he had not, his so doing

would not subject him to the penalties for rioting. Several witnesses were then called to prove the capture of Mr. Clifford, the hearing of the case before the magistrate at Bow Street, and his ultimate dismissal. Sergeant Shepherd was heard at great length on the other side, and contended that his client was perfectly justified in taking into custody a man who was inciting others to commit a breach of the peace.

The Lord Chief-Justice summed up, with an evident bias in favour of the defendant. He said an undue apprehension of the rights of an audience had got abroad. Even supposing the object of the rioters to be fair and legal, they were not authorized to carry it by unfair means. In order to constitute a riot, it was not necessary that personal violence should be committed, and it seemed to him that the defendant had not acted in an improper manner in giving into custody a person who, by the display of a symbol, was encouraging others to commit a riot.

The jury retired to consider their verdict. The crowd without and within the court awaited the result in feverish suspense. Half an hour elapsed, when the jury returned with a verdict for the plaintiff—Damages, five pounds. The satisfaction of the spectators was evident upon their countenances, that of the judge expressed the contrary feeling. Turning to the foreman of the jury, his Lordship asked upon which of the two points re-

ferred to them, namely, the broad question, whether a riot had been committed, and, if committed, whether the plaintiff had participated in it, they had found their verdict?

The foreman stated, that they were all of opinion generally that the plaintiff had been illegally arrested. This vague answer did not satisfy his Lordship, and he repeated his question. He could not, however, obtain a more satisfactory reply. Evidently vexed at what he deemed the obtuseness or partiality of the jury, he turned to the bar, and said, that a spirit of a mischievous and destructive nature was abroad, which, if not repressed, threatened awful consequences. The country would be lost, he said, and the government overturned, if such a spirit were encouraged; it was impossible it could end in good. Time, the destroyer and fulfiller of predictions, has proved that his Lordship was a false prophet. The harmless O. P. war has been productive of no such dire results.

It was to be expected that after this triumph, the war in the pit would rage with redoubled acrimony. A riot beginning at half-price would not satisfy the excited feelings of the O. P.s on the night of such a victory. Long before the curtain drew up, the house was filled with them, and several placards were exhibited, which the constables and friends of the managers strove, as usual, to tear into shreds. One of them, which met this fate, was inscribed, "Success to O. P.! A British jury for ever!" It was soon

replaced by another of a similar purport. It is needless to detail the uproar that ensued; the jumping, the fighting, the roaring, and the howling. For nine nights more the same system was continued; but the end was at hand.

On the 14th a grand dinner was given at the Crown and Anchor tavern, to celebrate the victory of Mr. Clifford. "The reprobators of managerial insolence," as they called themselves, attended in considerable numbers, and Mr. Clifford was voted to the chair. The cloth had been removed, and a few speeches made, when the company were surprised by a message that their arch-enemy himself solicited the honour of an audience. It was some time ere they could believe that Mr. Kemble had ventured to such a place. After some parley the manager was admitted, and a conference was held. A treaty was ultimately signed and sealed, which put an end to the long-contested wars of O. P., and restored peace to the drama.

All this time the disturbance proceeded at the theatre with its usual spirit. It was now the sixty-sixth night of its continuance, and the rioters were still untired — still determined to resist to the last. In the midst of it a gentleman arrived from the Crown and Anchor, and announced to the pit that Mr. Kemble had attended the dinner, and had yielded at last to the demand of the public. He stated, that it had been agreed upon between him and the Committee for defending the persons under prose-

cution, that the boxes should remain at the advanced price; that the pit should be reduced to three shillings and sixpence; that the private boxes should be done away with; and that all prosecutions, on both sides, should be immediately stayed. This announcement was received with deafening cheers. As soon as the first burst of enthusiasm was over, the O. P.s became anxious for a confirmation of the intelligence, and commenced a loud call for Mr. Kemble. He had not then returned from the Crown and Anchor; but of this the pitites were not aware, and for nearly half an hour they kept up a most excruciating din. At length the great actor made his appearance, in his walking dress, with his cane in hand, as he had left the tavern. It was a long time before he could obtain silence. He apologized in the most respectful terms for appearing before them in such unbecoming costume, which was caused solely by his ignorance that he should have to appear before them that night. After announcing, as well as occasional interruptions would allow, the terms that had been agreed upon, he added, "In order that no trace or recollection of the past differences, which had unhappily prevailed so long, should remain, he was instructed by the proprietors to say, that they most sincerely lamented the course that had been pursued, and engaged that, on their parts, all legal proceedings should forthwith be put a stop to." The cheering which greeted this speech was in-

terrupted at the close by loud cries from the pit of "Dismiss Brandon," while one or two exclaimed, "We want old prices generally,—six shillings for the boxes." After an ineffectual attempt to address them again upon this point, Mr. Kemble made respectful and repeated obeisances, and withdrew. The noises still continued, until Munden stood forward, leading by the hand the humbled box-keeper, contrition in his looks, and in his hands a written apology, which he endeavoured to read. The uproar was increased threefold by his presence, and, amid cries of "We won't hear him!" "Where's his master?" he was obliged to retire. Mr. Harris, the son of Kemble's co-manager, afterwards endeavoured to propitiate the audience in his favour; but it was of no avail; nothing less than his dismissal would satisfy the offended majesty of the pit. Amid this uproar the curtain finally fell, and the O. P. dance was danced for the last time within the walls of Covent Garden.

On the following night it was announced that Brandon had resigned his situation. This turned the tide of popular ill-will. The performances were "The Wheel of Fortune," and an afterpiece. The house was crowded to excess; a desire to be pleased was manifest on every countenance, and when Mr. Kemble, who took his favourite character of Penruddock, appeared upon the stage, he was greeted with the most vehement applause. The noises ceased entirely, and the symbols of opposition dis-

appeared. The audience, hushed into attention, gave vent to no sounds but those of admiration for the genius of the actor. When, in the course of his part, he repeated the words, "So! I am in London again!" the aptness of the expression to the circumstances of the night, was felt by all present, and acknowledged by a round of boisterous and thrice repeated cheering. It was a triumphant scene for Mr. Kemble after his long annoyances. He had achieved a double victory. He had, not only as a manager, soothed the obstinate opposition of the play-goers, but as an actor he had forced from one of the largest audiences he had ever beheld, approbation more cordial and unanimous than he had ever enjoyed before. The popular favour not only turned towards him; it embraced everybody connected with the theatre, except the poor victim, Brandon. Most of the favourite actors were called before the curtain to make their bow, and receive the acclamations of the pit. At the close of the performances, a few individuals, implacable and stubborn, got up a feeble cry of "Old prices for the boxes;" but they were quickly silenced by the reiterated cheers of the majority, or by cries of "Turn them out!" A placard, the last of its race, was at the same time exhibited in the front of the pit, bearing, in large letters, the words "We are satisfied."

Thus ended the famous wars of O. P., which, for a period of nearly three months, had kept the metro-

polis in an uproar. And after all, what was the grand result? As if the whole proceeding had been a parody upon the more destructive, but scarcely more sensible wars recorded in history, it was commenced in injustice, carried on in bitterness of spirit, and ended, like the labour of the mountain, in a mouse. The abatement of sixpence in the price of admission to the pit, and the dismissal of an unfortunate servant, whose only fault was too much zeal in the service of his employers,—such were the grand victories of the O. P.'s.

THE THUGS, OR PHANSIGARS.

Orribili favelle — parole di dolor. — DANTE.

AMONG the black deeds which Superstition has imposed as duties upon her wretched votaries, none are more horrible than the practices of the murderers, who, under the name of Thugs, or Phansigars, have so long been the scourge of India. For ages they have pursued their dark and dreadful calling, moulding assassination into a science, or extolling it as a virtue, worthy only to be practised by a race favoured of Heaven. Of late years this atrocious delusion has excited much attention, both in this country and in India; an attention which, it is to be hoped, will speedily lead to the uprooting of a doctrine so revolting and anti-human. Although the British Government has extended over Hindostan for so long a period, it does not appear that Europeans even suspected the existence of this mysterious sect until the commencement of the present century. In the year 1807, a gang of Thugs, laden with the plunder of murdered travellers, was accidentally discovered. The inquiries then set on foot revealed to the

astonished Government a system of iniquity unparalleled in the history of man. Subsequent investigation extended the knowledge; and by throwing light upon the peculiar habits of the murderers, explained the reason why their crimes had remained so long undiscovered. In the following pages will be found an epitome of all the information which has reached Europe concerning them, derived principally from Dr. Sherwood's treatise upon the subject, published in 1816, and the still more valuable and more recent work of Mr. Sleeman, entitled the "Ramaseeana; or, Vocabulary of the peculiar Language of the Thugs."

The followers of this sect are called Thugs, or T'hugs, and their profession Thuggee. In the south of India they are called Phansigars: the former word signifying "a deceiver;" and the latter, "a strangler." They are both singularly appropriate. The profession of Thuggee is hereditary, and embraces, it is supposed, in every part of India, a body of at least ten thousand individuals, trained to murder from their childhood; carrying it on in secret and in silence, yet glorying in it, and holding the practice of it higher than any earthly honour. During the winter months, they usually follow some reputable calling, to elude suspicion; and in the summer, they set out in gangs over all the roads of India, to plunder and destroy. These gangs generally contain from ten to forty Thugs, and sometimes as many as two hundred.

Each strangler is provided with a noose, to despatch the unfortunate victim, as the Thugs make it a point never to cause death by any other means. When the gangs are very large, they divide into smaller bodies; and each taking a different route, they arrive at the same general place of rendezvous to divide the spoil. They sometimes travel in the disguise of respectable traders; sometimes as sepoys or native soldiers; and at others, as government officers. If they chance to fall in with an unprotected wayfarer, his fate is certain. One Thug approaches him from behind, and throws the end of a sash round his neck; the other end is seized by a second at the same instant, crossed behind the neck, and drawn tightly, while with their other hand the two Thugs thrust his head forward to expedite the strangulation: a third Thug seizes the traveller by the legs at the same moment, and he is thrown to the ground, a corpse before he reaches it.

But solitary travellers are not the prey they are anxious to seek. A wealthy caravan of forty or fifty individuals has not unfrequently been destroyed by them; not one soul being permitted to escape. Indeed, there is hardly an instance upon record of any one's escape from their hands, so surely are their measures taken, and so well do they calculate beforehand all the risks and difficulties of the undertaking. Each individual of the gang has his peculiar duty allotted to him. Upon approaching a

town, or *serai*, two or three, known as the *Soothaes*, or "inveiglers," are sent in advance to ascertain if any travellers are there; to learn, if possible, the amount of money or merchandize they carry with them, their hours of starting in the morning, or any other particulars that may be of use. If they can, they enter into conversation with them, pretend to be travelling to the same place, and propose, for mutual security, to travel with them. This intelligence is duly communicated to the remainder of the gang. The place usually chosen for the murder is some lonely part of the road in the vicinity of a jungle, and the time, just before dusk. At given signals, understood only by themselves, the scouts of the party station themselves in the front, in the rear, and on each side, to guard against surprise. A strangler and assistant strangler, called Bhurtote and Shamshea, place themselves, the one on the right, and the other on the left of the victim, without exciting his suspicion. At another signal the noose is twisted, drawn tightly by a strong hand at each extremity, and the traveller, in a few seconds, hurried into eternity. Ten, twelve, twenty, and in some instances, sixty persons have been thus despatched at the same moment. Should any victim, by a rare chance, escape their hands, he falls into those of the scouts who are stationed within hearing, who run upon him and soon overpower him.

Their next care is to dispose of the bodies. So

cautious are they to prevent detection, that they usually break all the joints to hasten decomposition. They then cut open the body to prevent it swelling in the grave and causing fissures in the soil above, by which means the jackals might be attracted to the spot, and thereby lead to discovery. When obliged to bury the body in a frequented district, they kindle a fire over the grave to obliterate the traces of the newly turned earth. Sometimes the grave-diggers of the party, whose office, like that of all the rest, is hereditary, are despatched to make the graves in the morning at some distant spot, by which it is known the travellers will pass. The stranglers, in the mean time, journey quietly with their victims, conversing with them in the most friendly manner. Towards nightfall they approach the spot selected for their murder; the signal is given, and they fall into the graves that have been ready for them since day-break. On one occasion, related by Captain Sleeman, a party of fifty-nine people, consisting of fifty-two men and seven women, were thus simultaneously strangled, and thrown into the graves prepared for them in the morning. Some of these travellers were on horseback and well armed, but the Thugs, who appear to have been upwards of two hundred in a gang, had provided against all risk of failure. The only one left alive of all that numerous party, was an infant four years old, who was afterwards initiated into all the mysteries of Thuggee.

If they cannot find a convenient opportunity for disposing of the bodies, they carry them for many miles, until they come to a spot secure from intrusion, and to a soil adapted to receive them. If fear of putrefaction admonishes them to use despatch, they set up a large screen or tent, as other travellers do, and bury the body within the enclosure, pretending, if inquiries are made, that their women are within. But this only happens when they fall in with a victim unexpectedly. In murders which they have planned previously, the finding of a place of sepulture is never left to hazard.

Travellers who have the misfortune to lodge in the same *choultry* or hostelry, as the Thugs, are often murdered during the night. It is either against their creed to destroy a sleeper, or they find a difficulty in placing the noose round the neck of a person in a recumbent position. When this is the case, the slumberer is suddenly aroused by the alarm of a snake or a scorpion. He starts to his feet, and finds the fatal sash around his neck.—He never escapes.

In addition to these Thugs who frequent the highways, there are others, who infest the rivers, and are called Pungoos. They do not differ in creed, but only in a few of their customs, from their brethren on shore. They go up and down the rivers in their own boats, pretending to be travellers of consequence, or pilgrims, proceeding to, or returning from Benares, Allahabad, or other

sacred places. The boatmen, who are also Thugs, are not different in appearance from the ordinary boatmen on the river. The artifices used to entice victims on board are precisely similar to those employed by the highway Thugs. They send out their "inveiglers" to scrape acquaintance with travellers, and find out the direction in which they are journeying. They always pretend to be bound for the same place, and vaunt the superior accommodation of the boat by which they are going. The travellers fall into the snare, are led to the Thug captain, who very often, to allay suspicion, demurs to take them, but eventually agrees for a moderate sum. The boat strikes off into the middle of the stream; the victims are amused and kept in conversation for hours by their insidious foes, until three taps are given on the deck above. This is a signal from the Thugs on the look-out that the coast is clear. In an instant the fatal noose is ready, and the travellers are no more. The bodies are then thrown, warm and palpitating, into the river, from a hole in the side of the boat, contrived expressly for the purpose.

A river Thug, who was apprehended, turned approver, to save his own life, and gave the following evidence relative to the practices of his fraternity:—"We embarked at Rajmahul. The travellers sat on one side of the boat, and the Thugs on the other; while we three (himself and two "stranglers,") were placed in the stern, the Thugs on our

left, and the travellers on our right. Some of the Thugs, dressed as boatmen, were above deck, and others walking along the bank of the river, and pulling the boat by the joon, or rope, and all, at the same time, on the look-out. We came up with a gentleman's pinnace and two baggage-boats, and were obliged to stop, and let them go on. The travellers seemed anxious; but were quieted by being told that the men at the rope were tired, and must take some refreshment. They pulled out something, and began to eat; and when the pinnace had got on a good way, they resumed their work, and our boat proceeded. It was now afternoon; and, when a signal was given above, that all was clear, the five Thugs who sat opposite the travellers sprang in upon them, and, with the aid of others, strangled them. Having done this, they broke their spinal bones, and then threw them out of a hole made at the side, into the river, and kept on their course; the boat being all this time pulled along by the men on the bank."

That such atrocities as these should have been carried on for nearly two centuries without exciting the attention of the British Government, seems incredible. But our wonder will be diminished when we reflect upon the extreme caution of the Thugs, and the ordinary dangers of travelling in India. The Thugs never murder a man near his own home, and they never dispose of their booty near the scene of the murder. They also

pay, in common with other and less atrocious robbers, a portion of their gains to the Polygars, or native authorities of the districts in which they reside, to secure protection. The friends and relatives of the victims, perhaps a thousand miles off, never surmise their fate till a period has elapsed when all inquiry would be fruitless, or, at least, extremely difficult. They have no clue to the assassins, and very often impute to the wild beasts of the jungles the slaughter committed by that wilder beast, man.

There are several gradations through which every member of the fraternity must regularly pass before he arrives at the high office of a Bhurtote, or strangler. He is first employed as a scout — then as a sexton — then as a Shumseea, or holder of hands, and lastly as a Bhurtote. When a man who is not of Thug lineage, or who has not been brought up from his infancy among them, wishes to become a strangler, he solicits the oldest, and most pious and experienced Thug, to take him under his protection and make him his disciple; and under his guidance he is regularly initiated. When he has acquired sufficient experience in the lower ranks of the profession, he applies to his *Gooroo,* or preceptor, to give the finishing grace to his education, and make a strangler of him. An opportunity is found when a solitary traveller is to be murdered; and the tyro, with his preceptor, having seen that the proposed victim is asleep, and in safe keeping

till their return, proceed to a neighbouring field and perform several religious ceremonies, accompanied by three or four of the oldest and steadiest members of the gang. The Gooroo first offers up a prayer to the goddess, saying, "Oh, Kalee! Kun-kalee! Bhud-kalee! Oh, Kalee! Maha-kalee! Calkutta Walee! if it seems fit to thee that the traveller now at our lodging should die by the hands of this thy slave, vouchsafe us thy good omen." They then sit down and watch for the good omen; and if they receive it within half an hour, conclude that their goddess is favourable to the claims of the new candidate for admission. If they have a bad omen, or no omen at all, some other Thug must put the traveller to death, and the aspirant must wait a more favourable opportunity, purifying himself in the mean time by prayer and humiliation for the favour of the goddess. If the good omen has been obtained, they return to their quarters; and the Gooroo takes a handkerchief and, turning his face to the west, ties a knot at one end of it, inserting a rupee, or other piece of silver. This knot is called the *goor khat*, or holy knot, and no man who has not been properly ordained is allowed to tie it. The aspirant receives it reverently in his right hand from his Gooroo, and stands over the sleeping victim, with a Shumseea, or holder of hands, at his side. The traveller is aroused, the handkerchief is passed around his neck, and, at a signal from the Gooroo,

is drawn tight till the victim is strangled; the Shumseea holding his hands to prevent his making any resistance. The work being now completed, the Bhurtote (no longer an aspirant, but an admitted member) bows down reverently in the dust before his Gooroo, and touches his feet with both his hands, and afterwards performs the same respect to his relatives and friends who have assembled to witness the solemn ceremony. He then waits for another favourable omen, when he unties the knot and takes out the rupee, which he gives to his Gooroo, with any other silver which he may have about him. The Gooroo adds some of his own money, with which he purchases what they call goor, or consecrated sugar, when a solemn sacrifice is performed, to which all the gang are invited. The relationship between the Gooroo and his disciple is accounted the most holy that can be formed, and subsists to the latest period of life. A Thug may betray his father, but never his Gooroo.

Dark and forbidding as is the picture already drawn, it will become still darker and more repulsive, when we consider the motives which prompt these men to systematic murder. Horrible as their practices would be, if love of plunder alone incited them, it is infinitely more horrible to reflect that the idea of duty and religion is joined to the hope of gain, in making them the scourges of their fellows. If plunder were their sole object, there would be

reason to hope, that when a member of the brotherhood grew rich, he would rest from his infernal toils; but the dismal superstition which he cherishes tells him never to desist. He was sent into the world to be a slayer of men, and he religiously works out his destiny. As religiously he educates his children to pursue the same career, instilling into their minds, at the earliest age, that Thuggee is the noblest profession a man can follow, and that the dark goddess they worship will always provide rich travellers for her zealous devotees.

The following is the wild and startling legend upon which the Thugs found the divine origin of their sect. They believe that, in the earliest ages of the world, a gigantic demon infested the earth, and devoured mankind as soon as they were created. He was of so tall a stature, that when he strode through the most unfathomable depths of the great sea, the waves, even in tempest, could not reach above his middle. His insatiable appetite for human flesh almost unpeopled the world, until Bhawanee, Kalee, or Davee, the goddess of the Thugs, determined to save mankind by the destruction of the monster. Nerving herself for the encounter, she armed herself with an immense sword; and, meeting with the demon, she ran him through the body. His blood flowed in torrents as he fell dead at her feet; but from every drop there sprang up another monster, as rapacious and as terrible as the first. Again the goddess upraised her massive sword, and hewed

down the hellish brood by hundreds; but the more she slew, the more numerous they became. Every drop of their blood generated a demon; and, although the goddess endeavoured to lap up the blood ere it sprang into life, they increased upon her so rapidly, that the labour of killing became too great for endurance. The perspiration rolled down her arms in large drops, and she was compelled to think of some other mode of exterminating them. In this emergency, she created two men out of the perspiration of her body, to whom she confided the holy task of delivering the earth from the monsters. To each of the men she gave a handkerchief, and showed them how to kill without shedding blood. From her they learned to tie the fatal noose; and they became, under her tuition, such expert stranglers, that, in a very short space of time, the race of demons became extinct.

When there were no more to slay, the two men sought the great goddess, in order to return the handkerchiefs. The grateful Bhawanee desired that they would retain them, as memorials of their heroic deeds; and in order that they might never lose the dexterity that they had acquired in using them, she commanded that, from thenceforward, they should strangle men. These were the two first Thugs, and from them the whole race have descended. To the early Thugs the goddess was more direct in her favours, than she has been to their successors. At first, she undertook to bury

the bodies of all the men they slew and plundered, upon the condition that they should never look back to see what she was doing. The command was religiously observed for many ages, and the Thugs relied with implicit faith upon the promise of Bhawanee; but as men became more corrupt, the ungovernable curiosity of a young Thug offended the goddess, and led to the withdrawal of a portion of her favour. This youth, burning with a desire to see how she made her graves, looked back, and beheld her in the act, not of burying, but of devouring, the body of a man just strangled. Half of the still palpitating remains was dangling over her lips. She was so highly displeased that she condemned the Thugs, from that time forward, to bury their victims themselves. Another account states that the goddess was merely tossing the body in the air; and that, being naked, her anger was aggravated by the gaze of mortal eyes upon her charms. Before taking a final leave of her devotees, she presented them with one of her teeth for a pickaxe, one of her ribs for a knife, and the hem of her garment for a noose. She has not since appeared to human eyes.

The original tooth having been lost in the lapse of ages, new pickaxes have been constructed, with great care and many ceremonies, by each considerable gang of Thugs, to be used in making the graves of strangled travellers. The pickaxe is looked upon with the utmost veneration by the

tribe. A short account of the process of making it, and the rites performed, may be interesting, as showing still further their gloomy superstition. In the first place, it is necessary to fix upon a lucky day. The chief Thug then instructs a smith to forge the holy instrument: no other eye is permitted to see the operation. The smith must engage in no other occupation until it is completed, and the chief Thug never quits his side during the process. When the instrument is formed, it becomes necessary to consecrate it to the especial service of Bhawanee. Another lucky day is chosen for this ceremony, care being had in the mean time that the shadow of no earthly thing fall upon the pickaxe, as its efficacy would be for ever destroyed. A learned Thug then sits down; and turning his face to the west, receives the pickaxe in a brass dish. After muttering some incantation, he throws it into a pit already prepared for it, where it is washed in clear water. It is then taken out, and washed again three times; the first time in sugar and water, the second in sour milk, and the third in spirits. It is then dried, and marked from the head to the point with seven red spots. This is the first part of the ceremony: the second consists in its purification by fire. The pickaxe is again placed upon the brass dish, along with a cocoa-nut, some sugar, cloves, white sandal-wood, and other articles. A fire of the mango tree, mixed with dried cow-dung, is then kindled; and the officiating

Thug, taking the pickaxe with both hands, passes it seven times through the flames.

It now remains to be ascertained whether the goddess is favourable to her followers. For this purpose, the cocoa-nut is taken from the dish and placed upon the ground. The officiating Thug, turning to the spectators, and holding the axe uplifted, asks, "Shall I strike?" Assent being given, he strikes the nut with the but-end of the axe, exclaiming, "All hail! mighty Davee! great mother of us all!" The spectators respond, "All hail! mighty Davee! and prosper thy children, the Thugs!"

If the nut is severed at the first blow, the goddess is favourable; if not, she is unpropitious: all their labour is thrown away, and the ceremony must be repeated upon some more fitting occasion. But if the sign be favourable, the axe is tied carefully in a white cloth and turned towards the west, all the spectators prostrating themselves before it. It is then buried in the earth, with its point turned in the direction the gang wishes to take on their approaching expedition. If the goddess desires to warn them that they will be unsuccessful, or that they have not chosen the right track, the Thugs believe that the point of the axe will veer round, and point to the better way. During an expedition, it is entrusted to the most prudent and exemplary Thug of the party: it is his care to hold it fast. If by any chance he

should let it fall, consternation spreads through the gang: the goddess is thought to be offended; the enterprise is at once abandoned; and the Thugs return home in humiliation and sorrow, to sacrifice to their gloomy deity, and win back her estranged favour. So great is the reverence in which they hold the sacred axe, that a Thug will never break an oath that he has taken upon it. He fears that, should he perjure himself, his neck would be so twisted by the offended Bhawanee as to make his face turn to his back; and that, in the course of a few days, he would expire in the most excruciating agonies.

The Thugs are diligent observers of signs and omens. No expedition is ever undertaken before the auspices are solemnly taken. Upon this subject Captain Sleeman says, "Even the most sensible approvers, who have been with me for many years, as well Hindoos as Mussulmans, believe that their good or ill success depended upon the skill with which the omens were discovered and interpreted, and the strictness with which they were observed and obeyed. One of the old Sindouse stock told me, in presence of twelve others, from Hydrabad, Behar, the Dooah, Oude, Rajpootana, and Bundelcund, that, had they not attended to these omens, they never could have thrived as they did. In ordinary cases of murder, other men seldom escaped punishment, while they and their families had, for ten generations, thrived, although

they had murdered hundreds of people. 'This,' said the Thug, 'could never have been the case had we not attended to omens, and had not omens been intended for us. There were always signs around us to guide us to rich booty, and warn us of danger, had we been always wise enough to discern them and religious enough to attend to them.' Every Thug present concurred with him from his soul."

A Thug, of polished manners and great eloquence, being asked by a native gentleman, in the presence of Captain Sleeman, whether he never felt compunction in murdering innocent people, replied with a smile that he did not. "Does any man," said he, "feel compunction in following his trade? and are not all our trades assigned us by Providence?" He was then asked how many people he had killed with his own hands in the course of his life? "I have killed none," was the reply. "What! and have you not been describing a number of murders in which you were concerned?" "True; but do you suppose that I committed them? Is any man killed by man's killing? Is it not the hand of God that kills, and are we not the mere instruments in the hands of God?"

Upon another occasion, Sahib, an approver, being asked if he had never felt any pity or compunction at murdering old men or young children, or persons with whom he had sat and conversed, and who had told him, perchance, of

their private affairs—their hopes and their fears, their wives and their little ones? replied unhesitatingly that he never did. From the time that the omens were favourable, the Thugs considered all the travellers they met as victims thrown into their hands by their divinity to be killed. The Thugs were the mere instruments in the hands of Bhawanee to destroy them. "If we did not kill them," said Sahib, "the goddess would never again be propitious to us, and we and our families would be involved in misery and want. If we see or hear a bad omen, it is the order of the goddess not to kill the travellers we are in pursuit of, and we dare not disobey."

As soon as an expedition has been planned, the goddess is consulted. On the day chosen for starting, which is never during the unlucky months of July, September, and December, nor on a Wednesday or Thursday; the chief Thug of the party fills a brass jug with water, which he carries in his right hand by his side. With his left, he holds upon his breast the sacred pickaxe, wrapped carefully in a white cloth, along with five knots of turmeric, two copper, and one silver coin. He then moves slowly on, followed by the whole of the gang, to some field or retired place, where halting, with his countenance turned in the direction they wish to pursue, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, saying, "Great goddess! universal mother! if this, our meditated expedition, be fitting in thy sight, vouchsafe to help

us, and give us the signs of thy approbation." All the Thugs present solemnly repeat the prayer after their leader, and wait in silence for the omen. If within half an hour they see *Pilhaoo,* or good omen on the left, it signifies that the goddess has taken them by the left hand to lead them on; if they see the *Thibaoo,* or omen on the right, it signifies that she has taken them by the right hand also. The leader then places the brazen pitcher on the ground and sits down beside it, with his face turned in the same direction for seven hours, during which time his followers make all the necessary preparations for the journey. If, during this interval, no unfavourable signs are observed, the expedition advances slowly, until it arrives at the bank of the nearest stream, when they all sit down and eat of the goor, or consecrated sugar. Any evil omens that are perceived after this ceremony may be averted by sacrifices; but any evil omens before, would at once put an end to the expedition.

Among the evil omens are the following:—If the brazen pitcher drops from the hand of the Jemadar or leader, it threatens great evil either to him or to the gang—sometimes to both. If they meet a funeral procession, a blind man, a lame man, an oil-vender, a carpenter, a potter, or a dancing-master, the expedition will be dangerous. In like manner it is unlucky to sneeze, to meet a woman with an empty pail, a couple of jackals, or a hare. The crossing of their path by the latter is considered

peculiarly inauspicious. Its cry at night on the left is sometimes a good omen, but if they hear it on the right it is very bad; a warning sent to them from Bhawanee that there is danger if they kill. Should they disregard this warning, and led on by the hope of gain, strangle any traveller, they would either find no booty on him, or such booty as would eventually lead to the ruin and dispersion of the gang. Bhawanee would be wroth with her children; and causing them to perish in the jungle, would send the hares to drink water out of their skulls.

The good omens are quite as numerous as the evil. It promises a fortunate expedition, if, on the first day, they pass through a village where there is a fair. It is also deemed fortunate, if they hear wailing for the dead in any village but their own. To meet a woman with a pitcher full of water upon her head, bodes a prosperous journey and a safe return. The omen is still more favourable if she be in a state of pregnancy. It is said of the Thugs of the Jumaldehee and Lodaha tribes, that they always make the youngest Thug of the party kick the body of the first person they strangle, five times on the back, thinking that it will bring them good luck. This practice, however, is not general. If they hear an ass bray on the left at the commencement of an expedition, and an another soon afterwards on the right, they believe that they shall be supereminently successful, that they shall strangle a multitude of travellers, and find great booty.

After every murder a solemn sacrifice, called the Tuponee, is performed by all the gang. The goor, or consecrated sugar, is placed upon a large cloth or blanket, which is spread upon the grass. Beside it is deposited the sacred pickaxe, and a piece of silver for an offering. The Jemadar, or chief of the party, together with all the oldest and most prudent Thugs, take their places upon the cloth, and turn their faces to the west. Those inferior Thugs who cannot find room upon the privileged cloth, sit round as close to it as possible. A pit is then dug, into which the Jemadar pours a small quantity of the goor, praying at the same time that the goddess will always reward her followers with abundant spoils. All the Thugs repeat the prayer after him. He then sprinkles water upon the pickaxe, and puts a little of the goor upon the head of every one who has obtained a seat beside him on the cloth. A short pause ensues, when the signal for strangling is given, as if a murder were actually about to be committed, and each Thug eats his goor in solemn silence. So powerful is the impression made upon their imagination by this ceremony, that it almost drives them frantic with enthusiasm. Captain Sleeman relates, that when he reproached a Thug for his share in a murder of great atrocity, and asked him whether he never felt pity; the man replied, "We all feel pity sometimes; but the goor of the Tuponee changes our nature; it would change the nature of a horse. Let any man once

taste of that goor, and he will be a Thug, though he know all the trades and have all the wealth in the world. I never was in want of food; my mother's family was opulent, and her relations high in office. I have been high in office myself, and became so great a favourite wherever I went that I was sure of promotion; yet I was always miserable when absent from my gang, and obliged to return to Thuggee. My father made me taste of that fatal goor, when I was yet a mere boy; and if I were to live a thousand years I should never be able to follow any other trade."

The possession of wealth, station in society, and the esteem of his fellows, could not keep this man from murder. From his extraordinary confession we may judge of the extreme difficulty of exterminating a sect who are impelled to their horrid practises, not only by the motives of self-interest which govern mankind in general, but by a fanaticism which fills up the measure of their whole existence. Even severity seems thrown away upon the followers of this brutalizing creed. To them, punishment is no example; they have no sympathy for a brother Thug who is hung at his own door by the British Government, nor have they any dread of his fate. Their invariable idea is, that their goddess only suffers those Thugs to fall into the hands of the law, who have contravened the peculiar observances of Thuggee, and who have neglected the omens she sent them for their guidance.

To their neglect of the warnings of the goddess they attribute all the reverses which have of late years befallen their sect. It is expressly forbidden, in the creed of the old Thugs, to murder women or cripples. The modern Thugs have become unscrupulous upon this point, murdering women, and even children, with unrelenting barbarity. Captain Sleeman reports several conversations upon this subject, which he held at different times with Thugs, who had been taken prisoners, or who had turned approvers. One of them, named Zolfukar, said, in reply to the Captain, who accused him of murdering women, "Yes, and was not the greater part of Feringeea's and my gang seized, after we had murdered the two women and the little girl, at Manora, in 1830? and were we not ourselves both seized soon after? How could we survive things like that? Our ancestors never did such things." Lalmun, another Thug, in reply to a similar question, said, "Most of our misfortunes have come upon us for the murder of women. We all knew that they would come upon us some day, for this and other great sins. We were often admonished, but we did not take warning; and we deserve our fates." In speaking of the supposed protection which their goddess had extended to them in former times, Zolfukar said:—"Ah! we had some regard for religion then! We have lost it since. All kinds of men have been made Thugs, and all classes of people murdered, without distinction; and little

attention has been paid to omens. How, after this, could we think to escape? * * * * Davee never forsook us till we neglected her!"

It might be imagined that men who spoke in this manner of the anger of the goddess, and who, even in custody, showed so much veneration for their unhappy calling, would hesitate before they turned informers, and laid bare the secrets and exposed the haunts of their fellows:—among the more civilized ruffians of Europe, we often find the one chivalrous trait of character, which makes them scorn a reward that must be earned by the blood of their accomplices: but in India there is no honour among thieves. When the approvers are asked, if they, who still believe in the power of the terrible goddess Davee, are not afraid to incur her displeasure by informing of their fellows, they reply, that Davee has done her worst in abandoning them. She can inflict no severer punishment, and therefore gives herself no further concern about her degenerate children. This cowardly doctrine is, however, of advantage to the Government that seeks to put an end to the sect, and has thrown a light upon their practices, which could never have been obtained from other sources.

Another branch of the Thug abomination has more recently been discovered by the indefatigable Captain Sleeman. The followers of this sect are called Megpunnas, and they murder travellers, not to rob them of their wealth, but of their children, whom

they afterwards sell into slavery. They entertain the same religious opinions as the Thugs, and have carried on their hideous practices, and entertained their dismal superstition, for about a dozen years with impunity. The report of Captain Sleeman states, that the crime prevails almost exclusively in Delhi and the native principalities, or Rajpootana of Ulwar and Bhurtpore; and that it first spread extensively after the siege of Bhurtpore in 1826.

The original Thugs never or rarely travel with their wives; but the Megpunnas invariably take their families with them, the women and children being used to inveigle the victims. Poor travellers are always chosen by the Megpunnas as the objects of their murderous traffic. The females and children are sent on in advance to make acquaintance with emigrants or beggars on the road, travelling with their families, whom they entice to pass the night in some secluded place, where they are afterwards set upon by the men, and strangled. The women take care of the children. Such of them as are beautiful are sold at a high price to the brothels of Delhi, or other large cities; while the boys and ill-favoured girls are sold for servants at a more moderate rate. These murders are perpetrated perhaps five hundred miles from the homes of the unfortunate victims; and the children thus obtained, deprived of all their relatives, are never inquired after. Even should any of their kin be alive, they are too far off and too poor to institute

inquiries. One of the members, on being questioned, said the Megpunnas made more money than the other Thugs; it was more profitable to kill poor people for the sake of their children, than rich people for their wealth. Megpunnaism is supposed by its votaries to be, like Thuggee, under the immediate protection of the great goddess Davee, or Kalee, whose favour is to be obtained before the commencement of every expedition, and whose omens, whether of good or evil, are to be diligently sought on all occasions. The first apostle to whom she communicated her commands for the formation of the new sect, and the rules and ordinances by which it was to be guided, was called Kheama Jemadar. He was considered so holy a man, that the Thugs and Megpunnas considered it an extreme felicity to gaze upon and touch him. At the moment of his arrest by the British authorities, a fire was raging in the village, and the inhabitants gathered round him and implored him to intercede with his god, that the flames might be extinguished. The Megpunna, says the tradition, stretched forth his hand to heaven, prayed, and the fire ceased immediately.

There now only remain to be considered the exertions that have been made to remove from the face of India this purulent and disgusting sore. From the year 1807 until 1826, the proceedings against Thuggee were not carried on with any extraordinary degree of vigour; but, in the latter

year, the Government seems to have begun to act upon a settled determination to destroy it altogether. From 1826 to 1835, both included, there were committed to prison, in the various Presidencies, 1562 persons accused of this crime. Of these, 328 were hanged; 999 transported; 77 imprisoned for life; 71 imprisoned for shorter periods; 21 held to bail; and only 21 acquitted. Of the remainder, 31 died in prison, before they were brought to trial, 11 escaped, and 49 turned approvers.

One Feringeea, a Thug leader of great notoriety, was delivered up to justice in the year 1830, in consequence of the reward of five hundred rupees offered for his apprehension by the Government. He was brought before Captain Sleeman, at Sangir, in the December of that year, and offered, if his life were spared, to give such information as would lead to the arrest of several extensive gangs which had carried on their murderous practices undetected for several years. He mentioned the place of rendezvous, for the following February, of some well organized gangs, who were to proceed into Guzerat and Candeish. Captain Sleeman appeared to doubt his information; but accompanied the Thug to a mango grove, two stages from Sangir, on the road to Seronage. They reached this place in the evening, and in the morning Feringeea pointed out three places in which he and his gang had, at different intervals, buried the bodies of three parties of travellers whom they had

murdered. The sward had grown over all the spots, and not the slightest traces were to be seen that it had ever been disturbed. Under the sod of Captain Sleeman's tent were found the bodies of the first party, consisting of a pundit and his six attendants, murdered in 1818. Another party of five, murdered in 1824, were under the ground at the place where the Captain's horses had been tied up for the night; and four Brahmin carriers of the Ganges water, with a woman, were buried under his sleeping tent. Before the ground was moved, Captain Sleeman expressed some doubts; but Feringeea, after looking at the position of some neighbouring trees, said he would risk his life on the accuracy of his remembrance. The workmen dug five feet without discovering the bodies; but they were at length found a little beyond that depth, exactly as the Thug had described them. With this proof of his knowledge of the haunts of his brethren, Feringeea was promised his liberty and pardon if he would aid in bringing to justice the many large gangs to which he had belonged, and which were still prowling over the country. They were arrested in the February following, at the place of rendezvous pointed out by the approver, and most of them condemned and executed.

So far we learn from Captain Sleeman, who only brought down his tables to the close of the year 1835. A writer in the "Foreign Quarterly Review" furnishes an additional list of 241 per-

sons, committed to prison in 1836, for being concerned in the murder and robbery of 474 individuals. Of these criminals, 91 were sentenced to death, and 22 to imprisonment for life, leaving 306, who were sentenced to transportation for life, or shorter periods of imprisonment, or who turned approvers, or died in gaol. Not one of the whole number was acquitted.

Great as is this amount of criminals who have been brought to justice, it is to be feared that many years must elapse before an evil so deeply rooted can be eradicated. The difficulty is increased by the utter hopelessness of reformation as regards the survivors. Their numbers are still calculated to amount to ten thousand persons, who, taking the average of three murders annually for each, as calculated by Captain Sleeman and other writers, murder every year thirty thousand of their fellow creatures. This average is said to be under the mark; but even if we were to take it at only a third of this calculation, what a frightful list it would be! When religion teaches men to go astray, they go far astray indeed!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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